

HEALTHY TOUCH FOR ANGLICAN CLERGY  
IN PASTORAL, SACRAMENTAL, AND PRAYER MINISTRY

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To Simon.

Thank you.

I took courage, for the hand of the LORD my God was on me  
—Ezra 7:28

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ACNA: Anglican Church in North America

BCP: Book of Common Prayer

CPE: Clinical Pastoral Education

DOMA: Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic

GAFCON: The Global Anglican Future Conference

## ABSTRACT

In Christ, God became incarnate, inhabiting flesh. Jesus was human and divine, born to a human mother, and he frequently used touch in his ministry. Through their ordination, clergy imitate Christ as they shepherd their communities, offering people hope and a tangible way of connecting with each other and with God. In our western context and culture, clergy are in danger of losing their confidence in the amazing gift of touch. This project seeks to strengthen clergy hope in the solid Biblical, scientific and rational reasons for using touch with care and intentionality in their ministries.



## CHAPTER ONE TOUCH EXPLORED

To touch is to give life.  
—*Michelangelo*

### **Preamble**

- A single woman in her early 30s goes to an adult Sunday school class simply because she knows that there will be a baby she can cuddle.
- An elderly woman comes to church every Sunday and queues to get a hug from the Pastor at the end of the service, she misses her husband who died last year.
- A child runs by and gives the preacher a high 5.
- A celibate man comes to church, a greeter touches his shoulder when welcoming him. The man later says that was the moment he decided to come back to church.
- During the distribution of communion, a priest reaches out to bless children and they delight in the blessing, or perhaps they wriggle out of range.
- A woman pulls back involuntarily when her arm is touched without permission in a time of prayer.
- During an opportunity to “greet each other” during the Sunday service, a man sits deliberately staring forward not moving from his pew.

These are just a few of the scenes any clergy in any church might see played out on any Sunday. People coming into church may come to seek and worship God, but come also as people living out their stories, affected by the brokenness around them. Every one of them has reactions to touch—memories and experiences, for good or ill—as confessed in the liturgy, “We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have

done, and by what we have left undone.”<sup>1</sup> Deeds done to us and by us so often include both healthy and unhealthy touch.

In addition, the media is full of stories of abuse in the church. Sadly, as will be discussed later on, priests have been convicted in the Catholic, Anglican, and Evangelical worlds for child abuse, sexual harassment, rape, and sexual infidelity.<sup>2</sup> Clergy are clearly not immune from crossing the (inevitably fuzzy) boundaries of safe touch, and yet as people with clear authority within a church ought they, at least, to be more trustworthy than others?

## Introduction

And so how should the church react? Should clergy just resolutely refuse to touch anyone, ever, in order to minimize risk of doing or being perceived to do harm? Should there be a no-touch policy in churches? Chapter 2 establishes a Biblical, theological, psychological, and pastoral basis for healthy touch. Chapter 3 will explore the scientific reasons why healthy touch is so vital for all people’s wellbeing, and why a lack of touch can lead to ‘skin hunger’, or ‘touch hunger’: the longing for touch which makes bodies almost shout out for contact. It addresses the literature surrounding the scientific,

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<sup>1</sup> Anglican confession of sin, Rite 2. *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church: Together with the Psalter or Psalms of David According to the Use of the Episcopal Church* (New York: Church Hymnal Corp, 1979), 360.

<sup>2</sup> There are so many news articles it is hard to choose: “Pennsylvania priests ‘abused thousands of children,’” BBC News, August 14, 2018, accessed Nov 20, 2018, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-45190355>; “Child sexual abuse and the Catholic Church: What you need to know,” BBC News August 20, 2018, accessed Nov 20, 2018, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-44209971>; “Child sexual abuse royal commission delivers final report – as it happened,” *The Guardian*, March 13, 2018, accessed Nov 20, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/live/2017/dec/15/child-sexual-abuse-royal-commission-delivers-final-report-live>. In addition, there are reports on sexual abuse in the church in the UK, USA, and Australia; e.g. “The Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse: Final Report,” December 15, 2017, accessed Dec 10, 2018, <https://www.childabuse.royalcommission.gov.au/final-report>.

psychological, and physiological aspects of touch and then identifies some specific issues for various professional groups including doctors, teachers, and clergy. Chapter 4 considers the past and current experience of clergy regarding touch in their ministry through a questionnaire and then semi-structured interviews with selected respondents. The data is gathered from Anglican Church of North America (ACNA) clergy. Finally, Chapter 5 contains guidelines for healthy touch for clergy in both sacramental and pastoral ministry, and some indications of potential ways forward for Anglican churches and Seminaries as they develop their curriculum.

To begin with, let us consider the centrality of touch to the world. Touch is the first sense an embryo develops, the first experience a baby feels as it's been urged out of the womb, the first physical encounter of a pat on the back exhorting it to breathe, then the delight of its mother's skin bringing warmth and comfort and a familiar heartbeat.

Touch matters to our bodies, minds, and souls: without touch children fail to develop normally, they "wilt and shrivel."<sup>3</sup> As will be explored in Chapter 3, touch provides social glue as well as contributing to personal wholeness.

God created by the word of his mouth and the touch of his hand—forming Adam from the clay of the ground: molding, shaping.<sup>4</sup> He touches Adam's rib to form woman. The creation narrative is rich in touch, and God comes to earth as the incarnate Christ: touching and touchable to identify with and redeem his people.

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<sup>3</sup> Valerie Sinason, "No touch please—we're British psychodynamic practitioners," in *Touch Papers: Dialogues on Touch in the Psychoanalytic Space*, ed. Graeme Galton (London: Karnac Books, 2011), 50.

<sup>4</sup> "The Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature," Genesis 2:7. See also 2:21-22. All scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version of the Holy Bible unless otherwise indicated.

Touch grounds us, reminding us of who we are and where we are going. Touch may well be for most people the last sentient experience before death. Touch matters.

Touch matters in all interactions with others, including in the church where clergy often have moments where people will expose their deepest sorrows, hopes, and joys to them, and an appropriate touch can help them to feel seen, heard, and known. Touch is integral to all the sacraments, conveying the touch of God in deeply holy moments.<sup>5</sup>

But even as touch is so much a part of the rich goodness of relational life, it also presents an opportunity for one person to harm another, or even for self-harm. The ways bodies are touched can be deeply good or equally harmful.

This paper will look at the role of touch in the lives and ministries of clergy in the Anglican Church of North America (ACNA), embedding the research with clergy into a theology of this most wonderful gift. It will also look at the scientific research surrounding touch, looking at the impact on bodies, minds and spirits, both for good and ill.

The way healthy touch is viewed is embedded in one's worldview. As Christians, this begins with a belief in God and why and how he interacts with the world.<sup>6</sup> Touch is deeply embedded in a person's view of self, others, and God.

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<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>6</sup> The use of the male pronoun for God will generally be used. However, God's self-revelation is as like a father and like a mother, and clearly the Godhead transcends, and is the source of, all sexuality and gender. God is neither male nor female. This is particularly important to remember as we consider touch, as so often trauma is associated with a specific parent or is connected to sexuality. For those looking for healing, God must not only be envisioned as like a male.

## Touch Created

### God is Untouchable

You cannot touch God. Most orthodox Christians view God as holy: which at its core indicates that God is separate and “other”. God is transcendent and exists outside of a human framework of time, space, and matter. God is immaterial, and so beyond touch. When Moses goes up Mount Sinai to meet with God, there are very careful boundaries set to protect people.<sup>7</sup> When Uzzah carelessly touches the ark without appropriate regard for its holiness, he dies.<sup>8</sup> Revelation 4:8 says that throughout all eternity the redeemed will join the singing of “Holy, Holy, Holy.” This untouchability is then completely overturned by the incarnation of Christ, the choice that God made to step out of transcendence and become incarnate. A Christian worldview begins with a holy God who chooses to create a beloved people and then to allow himself to be touched by them.

Other attributes of God can be divided into the incommunicable and the communicable. Incommunicable attributes include God’s self-existence, immutability, infinity, omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscient unity etc.; the communicable attributes are those things which find analogies in humans, e.g. love, truth, goodness, kindness, righteousness, etc.<sup>9</sup> The most foundational of God’s communicable attributes is love: it encompasses most else, and is the clearest representation of his character. Although humans cannot know or grasp the full expression of love, from an earthly perspective

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<sup>7</sup> Exodus 19:12–13; Hebrews 12:18–21. All Scripture is taken from the English Standard Version of The Holy Bible unless otherwise noted.

<sup>8</sup> 2 Samuel 6:6–11. D. R. W. Wood and I. Howard Marshall, *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Downers Grove, IL.: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 836.

<sup>9</sup> Stanley Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2000), 91.

love is the prime motivation for creation. God establishes community through creating his beloved people, and then Jesus gave people a way to truly see this love in action.<sup>10</sup>

### And yet God Touches

There are a number of occasions in the Bible where God touches people supernaturally. Jacob wrestles with an angel and ends up with a limp.<sup>11</sup> The seraph touches Isaiah's lips with a coal and announces his sins are forgiven.<sup>12</sup> The Lord touches Jeremiah's mouth and commissions him.<sup>13</sup> Daniel was touched repeatedly when he was commissioned.<sup>14</sup> Ezekiel was not touched, but he was fed the scroll, indicating that the words he was to speak would be from the Lord.<sup>15</sup> John was touched on the Island of Patmos as he collapsed before the Lord in his prophecy.<sup>16</sup> These occasions signify God stepping within the physical boundaries of the world, physically interacting in the lives of his people. This is beautifully shown in Michelangelo's depiction of God's outstretched hand on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

Often God is portrayed as father. In the parable of the prodigal son, there is a picture of a father who cares so deeply for his child that he first releases him with a blessing, and then runs in what would be considered, in that cultural context, undignified

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<sup>10</sup> Genesis 2:18.

<sup>11</sup> Genesis 32:22-32.

<sup>12</sup> Isaiah 6:6-7.

<sup>13</sup> Jeremiah 1:9

<sup>14</sup> Daniel 10:10, 16, 18.

<sup>15</sup> Ezekiel 3:3.

<sup>16</sup> Revelation 1:17.

haste, to welcome him home with an enormous embrace and hug.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, the parable of the Good Samaritan identifies the kindness of the good man with God's care for his people: the acts of service – bandaging, tending, carrying – are all very tactile.<sup>18</sup>

In addition, God is seen as a mother. Matthew 23:27 describes God, saying, “How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!” In Isaiah 49:15, God tenderly uses the image of a mother as he reminds his people that he will never forget them. God is a personal God who extends love to her children as a caring mother does, protecting, sheltering, nurturing.

God created sentient beings who could touch and be touched. As creator, God describes people as the work of his hands.<sup>19</sup> Isaiah echoes this later when he refers to God as the potter.<sup>20</sup> Humans are in God's grip. Jeremiah was reminded of this when he watched the potter working the clay. The imagery of God's hand around his people, forming and reforming, is powerful. Job clearly grasped this too, as he describes God's hands forming and creating.<sup>21</sup> God knits children in the womb.<sup>22</sup>

God's hands are also described in terms of his creation of the world.<sup>23</sup> Later, when he touches the mountains they smoke, the earth and it melts.<sup>24</sup> The psalmist uses physical

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<sup>17</sup> “And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him,” Luke 15:20.

<sup>18</sup> Alister McGrath, *Christian Theology: an introduction* (Newark, NJ: Wiley, 2017), 200-208, and Luke 10:25-37.

<sup>19</sup> Isaiah 45:11.

<sup>20</sup> Isaiah 64:8.

<sup>21</sup> Job 10:8-11.

<sup>22</sup> Psalm 139:13.

<sup>23</sup> Genesis 2:7.

<sup>24</sup> Psalm 104:32; Amos 9:5.

imagery when he records, “When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers...”<sup>25</sup> Not only do God’s hands form, but they also protect: “The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms.”<sup>26</sup>

Ultimately, everyone will see God face to face, and will discover what it means to experience touch in full relationship with a holy, heavenly Lord. If what is experienced now is but a shadow, it is impossible even to imagine what a glorious moment that will be. But now, humanity lives in the reality of a fallen world, from the moment Eve and Adam touched and ate the fruit, choosing disobedience and independence rather than fealty and relationship.

### Touch and the Fall

This moment of the Fall – taking hold of the physical fruit of the knowledge of evil – led to separation and darkness entering the world. God’s people stepped under the curse of hard work and difficult childbirth. Brokenness and evil were welcomed and now surround us: some brokenness is directly personal, some speaks of a fallen creation, and some is a reflection of a society which has few normative values. The capacity to touch for good also became an opportunity for evil. Violence and war sprang from greed and a thirst for power and control. Violent touch – starting with Cain – became pervasive, creating immense damage in the lives of individuals, communities, and countries.

God is self-limiting: He created people with free will, who have veered off track in their fallen state. He allowed his people to make choices which led to their separation

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<sup>25</sup> Psalm 8:3.

<sup>26</sup> Deuteronomy 33:27. Leland Ryken, Jim Wilhoit, Tremper Longman, et al., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 701.



from God. McGrath discusses the idea that evil can pervert all things good, even touch and relationships, leading to brokenness, pain, and abuse.<sup>27</sup>

One of the Hebrew words for “sin” is חטא (*hhatah*) which means to ‘miss the mark’, an implication of specific actions, whether of thought, word or deed, choosing not to do right, and suffering comes from things done, things other people do, and things that happen in the world.<sup>28</sup> Death is the consequence of all sin, and judgment follows thereafter. The question arises as to how judgment will come, and how this affects life choices now. Sickness and death abound, but the Kingdom of God breaks through whenever there is healing and restoration.<sup>29</sup> Sickness and disease and death are a display of the fallen nature of the world, but this is overcome by the touch of Jesus who brings healing, life, and forgiveness, ultimately breaking down the gates of hell. Evil and sin destroy lives and community. However, in this broken world there are signs of the now of the Kingdom of Heaven. Every time a believer prays the Lord’s Prayer, “Thy Kingdom come,” they are reminded that this is the objective of Christians – to ask, believe, and hope for the foretaste of the Parousia when all things, including touch, will be redeemed.

### Touch Redeemed

Ultimately, God’s plan for the redemption of his people is shown in the incarnate Christ. God sending his son to be embodied as a man so that he could offer himself as the sacrifice for sin, through his very body. God is holy, separate, and yet, through Jesus, he has made a way for his people to connect with and, indeed, touch him without fear. In

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<sup>27</sup> McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 223.

<sup>28</sup> Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 183.

<sup>29</sup> McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 211.

order to redeem humanity, Christ's incarnation became God's ultimate gesture of identification with his creation.

Jesus was a human being who touched and was touched. Jesus, fully God and fully man: the two natures in one person. Jesus used touch in many ways in his ministry to bring healing, comfort, and blessing.<sup>30</sup> He used his hands to wash his disciples' feet, to embody the nature of servanthood.<sup>31</sup> He exercised the contagious holiness of his High Priestly nature, bringing salvation not only through his ultimate sacrifice, but also on earth when those who touched him were engulfed in his purity rather than contaminating his holiness.<sup>32</sup>

On the cross, Jesus bore all the sin of mankind, all our shame and brokenness, standing as a substitution before the Father. As McGrath comments, "Jesus is the focal point at which the universal saving intention of God becomes a unique historical person."<sup>33</sup> All the healing Jesus offered through his earthly ministry gave temporary respite from sickness and death; the cross, on the other hand, brings eternal healing, where every touch finds its ultimate fulfilment. Jesus testified to the unique relationship between his word and actions: he challenged those around him to recognize by his deeds the validity of his claims to offer salvation. As Goldsworthy comments, these statements of Jesus were picked up by those he healed. "This eschatological proclamation is the means by which release, and liberty are achieved. This proclamation is an essential part of the ministry of Jesus... and [proclamation] is also the frequently reported activity of

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<sup>30</sup> Mark 1:45; 5:19–20.

<sup>31</sup> John 13:12–14.

<sup>32</sup> e.g. Mark 5:29–30.

<sup>33</sup> McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 290.

those who have been touched by Jesus as he demonstrates his saving and healing power (Mark 1:45; 5:19–20). The relationship of this activity to the gospel is clearly seen in Luke 24:46–48, where Jesus links his death and resurrection with proclamation (kerychthēnai) and witness (martyres).”<sup>34</sup>

As an embodied man, Jesus was constrained by geography and time. He knew psychological and physical need, and hence the need for touch. John lay on his breast at the Last Supper, the woman washed his feet at the feast. Jesus wept and prayed, grew tired and weary and dirty. Jesus partook of the humanity which is part of God’s creative design for us. God knew that humans would take actions that result in pain and broken relationships. However, through the humanity of Christ he brought redemption for suffering. Jesus’ heart, mind, body, and will were perfectly integrated. Christians long for this integration, and pray to be both fully human and, at the same time, increasingly more like Jesus.

Touch can also be the antidote to doubt: “He showed them his hands and his side,” and “Behold my hands and my feet.”<sup>35</sup> Jesus clearly wanted the disciples to see his resurrected body as he walked, spoke, cooked fish on the beach, broke bread, appeared before them, and spoke with them. Jesus understood the likelihood of docetism – and the challenge to whether he really was a man, hence the necessity for many physical, tangible signs of his corporeality. Touching Jesus is seen to establish faith, not simply to dispel doubt.

McGrath discusses “Kasper’s pneumatologically oriented Christology”: Jesus is unique in the way that he is completely filled with the Holy Spirit at his baptism when the

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<sup>34</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, “Gospel,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 523.

<sup>35</sup> John 20:20; Luke 24:39.

Spirit in the form of a dove descended and touched him.<sup>36</sup> Willard suggests that, as people are filled with the Holy Spirit, their bodies become storehouses of power, and that we can be used by God with his limitless power.<sup>37</sup> This power is evident wherever Jesus heals through touch – which opens the extraordinary possibility that Christians can reach out in Christ’s name with touch as they too pray for healing.

Ultimately, a Christian view of salvation is wrapped up with the incarnation of Christ, who is the Savior of the world through his holiness, his victory over sin and death and his obedience to the will of the Father. This salvation is offered through the cross and the sacrifice of Jesus, a feeling, touching, embodied human being who is then resurrected – whilst he also remains a vibrant person of the Trinity in perichoretic relationship with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Touch is not only a vital sense to make sense of the physical and emotional world but it is also critical to a spiritual worldview. The deepest mystery of the Christian faith is that of the incarnation. Christ becoming flesh and dwelling amongst us. God becoming a person who touches and is touched. Jesus, the incarnate Christ, used touch repeatedly in his ministry.

The world, the flesh and the devil are frequently seen as foundational to much that is wrong in the world.<sup>38</sup> Paul expounds on the flesh and the devil in Ephesians 2:2-3, before offering a corrective in Romans 6:12-14, that as Christians offer themselves to God, he can use them as instruments for righteousness as he forgives and heals their

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<sup>36</sup> Matthew 3:16. McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 290.

<sup>37</sup> See chapters five and six in Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990).

<sup>38</sup> Simon Vibert’s excellent book expands on this topic. Simon Vibert, *Perpetual Battle: The World, the Flesh and the Devil* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2018).

brokenness. The baptismal promises include the words, “Do you renounce the sinful desires of the flesh that draw you from the love of God?”<sup>39</sup> Identification with Christ in his death and resurrection – which is done through the physical act of baptism – is an essential part of stepping into the promises of the now of the Kingdom of Heaven.

### Touch Restored

Bodies are integral to humanity, and they were a deliberate choice on the part of the creator.<sup>40</sup> Now we live in the overlap. We see signs of the Kingdom of God: the now and the “not yet”. Our bodies are often broken but physical healing can be experienced as by the woman who was bleeding, and new life was given to Jairus’ daughter – albeit both on a short term basis – through a physical encounter with Jesus’ holiness.<sup>41</sup> At the heart of the Christian story is the expectation of the return of Christ, of a restoration of all things to their intended pre-fall state: a new heaven and a new earth. Will embodiment be a feature of heaven? Fergusson suggests we should see, “The Kingdom of God both as a release from our present mode of physical existence, and as a transformation of the entire created order.”<sup>42</sup> This reflects Paul’s teaching on the new creation which will ultimately be “set free from its bondage.”<sup>43</sup> As McGrath puts it, salvation is, “That which has happened, is happening and will happen.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Anglican Church in North America, *Texts for Common Prayer: Holy Baptism [PDF]*, September 6, 2018, accessed Nov 21, 2018, [http://anglicanchurch.net/?/main/texts\\_for\\_common\\_prayer](http://anglicanchurch.net/?/main/texts_for_common_prayer), 3.

<sup>40</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1985), 138.

<sup>41</sup> Mark 5:29, 41. More on these stories in Chapter 2.

<sup>42</sup> David Fergusson, “Eschatology,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine*, ed. Colin E. Gunton (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 237.

<sup>43</sup> Romans 8:20-21.

Jesus rose from the dead with a tangible body; he urged the disciples to touch it and see. Christians believe they will experience a physical resurrection – 1 Corinthians 15 supports this view.<sup>45</sup> Christ was raised with a physical body, and post-resurrection he walked, breathed, and ate fish in a fully human, embodied manner.<sup>46</sup>

Where eternal existence is embodied, it is also communal: the new heaven will be a world full of other people. Hence, it is plausible to believe that where touch is seen in all its beauty in this world, the heavenly version – the fulfilment of all that it was originally created to be – will be infinitely more beautiful. Eventually, the touch of God will be felt with great firmness, “...in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.”<sup>47</sup>

### **Touch in the Church**

The church represents the extension of Christ’s mission to the world. Hence, as Jesus sent the disciples out to every corner of the earth, to bring his message of healing and redemption through the word and action, so too Christians have a theology which incorporates the onus to touch the untouchables, communicate life to the spiritually dead, and, as followers of Christ, bring hope to a hurting world. Clergy, as Christ’s representatives in the church, must take this responsibility seriously as they regard their ministry in their communities.

Christ’s contagious holiness is important when clergy consider how to use touch in every aspect of their pastoral and sacramental ministries. They should be confident as

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<sup>44</sup> McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 319.

<sup>45</sup> See also Romans 6:5; 1 Peter 2:24.

<sup>46</sup> Unlike Gnostics who hold to a purely spiritual resurrection. James Eckman, “Gnosticism,” in *Exploring Church History* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002), 22.

<sup>47</sup> Hebrews 12:26-27.

ones who convey the contagious holiness of Christ, as those indwelt by the Holy Spirit and expectant, asking the Holy Spirit to act. Romans 12 develops this idea of bodies being made holy. As clergy come to look more like Christ, they should exercise more of his contagious holiness in their interactions with others. However, in engagement with others there is always risk, and inevitably encounters that are evil. Clergy exist and operate in a world that is fallen into sin and where touch is often not only misunderstood, but also misused and abused.

Love is shown where there is relationship; and loving relationship in this world almost always requires touch. People need the touch of affirmation, comfort, affection, reassurance, intimacy, and in marriage, sexual touch. All people need healthy touch for development and social connection, and this will be extensively discussed in Chapter 3.<sup>48</sup> Clergy have the opportunity, in a safe environment, to use touch to comfort, to affirm, and to express the love of God to his people.

Through the narrative of the Old Testament we see God relating to his people in specific places, establishing a social fabric, with guidelines and laws, to have his dwelling with his people as the central pivot point; initially in the Tabernacle, and then the pillars of fire and cloud and then the Temple. The church now takes that role, and should be a voice for justice and integrity, upholding moral law and promoting Biblical and godly values. Within the community life of a church body, healthy touch is vital for healthy interactions both between individuals, sub-groups, and between each person and God.

Within a church setting, touch occurs both formally and informally. Informally, there is the casual hug between friends in the lobby before or after church, the handshake

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<sup>48</sup> Two pivotal scientific books on this topic are Ashley Montagu, *Touching : The Human Significance of the Skin* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), and David J. Linden, *Touch: The Science of Hand, Heart, and Mind* (New York: Penguin Books, 2016).

with a greeter, the moment when the Peace is passed and neighbors in a pew turn to each other and shake a hand.<sup>49</sup> Each of these moments involves a recognition of the other, a tangible assurance that the person is seen and acknowledged, a moment establishing connection and offering trust and relationship.

For pastors these moments occur also in the context of pastoral conversations and appointments, which may be one-to-one, and in a private rather than a public setting. How should a clergy person respond to those they encounter who are often in moments of vulnerability and stress? How can clergy incorporate healthy touch in their engagements with parishioners? These are key questions which chapter 5 will address.

There are also the more formal moments of sacramental touch: the laying on of hands by the Bishop at ordination, pouring water over the skin at baptism, binding hands together in marriage, sealing a prayer with anointing oil on the forehead. There are moments of deep symbolism when a priest marks the forehead with ashes on Ash Wednesday, symbolizing mortality; or indeed the way the priest lays their hands on a coffin, touch being one stage removed from the body, as a soul is committed to God after death.

Other meaningful times of touch may occur in prayer ministry, when – with permission – the prayer minister lays their hand upon the shoulder of a person who has come with a need or desire or a moment of grateful thanks, and, as an act of recognition and solidarity, the person praying and the prayee together approach God’s throne of grace. Touch offers a way of recognizing the other, offering reassurance and comfort in

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<sup>49</sup> In an Anglican liturgy there is a moment where those present are encouraged by the priest to “greet each other with a mark of peace.” This often involves a handshake, a high-five or, between friends, a hug or kiss on the cheek. This is a largely symbolic step in recognition of the need for congregants to be in good standing with other believers before coming to communion (Matthew 25: 23-24).



times of stress or distress when words may not come easily, or even be appropriate or helpful.

It is critical that clergy approach these moments of sacramental, pastoral and prayerful moments with sensitivity and joy in the theological, physiological, emotional, and eternal benefits of incorporating a “holy touch” into the relationship.

### **The Wider World of Touch**

Six weeks after conception, an embryo first begins to develop a sense of touch.<sup>50</sup> This vital faculty helps children order the world around them. Whether to help them avoid getting burned by a pan on a hot stove, through to receiving the emotional reassurance of a hug or kiss, or the spiritual moment as they are sprinkled by the water of baptism, skin is always on the alert helping people to be aware of the world around them. Skin not only holds a body together, but it shows the external world so much of what is happening in the internal world. Smile-lines and wrinkles etch faces with a story of a life well-spent, blushes coloring the face of one embarrassed by or attracted to another. Skin shivers when cold and sweats when hot. And so touch is used, person to person, as an expression of love and affection, or rage and lust.

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<sup>50</sup> Montagu, *Touching*, 4. “When the embryo is less than an inch long from crown to rump, and less than six weeks old, light stroking of the upper lip or wings of the nose will cause bending of the neck and trunk away from the source of stimulation. At this stage in its development the embryo has neither eyes nor ears. Yet its skin is already highly developed, although in a manner not at all comparable to the development it is still to undergo. At nine fetal weeks, when the palm is touched the fingers will bend as if to grip; at twelve weeks, the fingers and thumb will close. Pressure at the base of the thumb will cause the fetus to open its mouth and move its tongue. Firm touching of the back or sole of the foot will result in toe-curling or fanning-out, as well as the placing reflex bending of the knee and hip, as if to withdraw from the touch. In the womb, bathed by its mother's amniotic fluid and enveloped by the soft walls of the womb, ‘rocked in the cradle of the deep,’ the conceptus leads an aquatic existence. In this environment its skin must have the capacity to resist the absorption of too much water, the soaking effects of its liquid medium, to respond appropriately to physical, chemical, and neural changes, and to changes in temperature.”

The English language reflects an interest in touch: grumpy people are “touchy”, frightened people’s skin “creeps”. People talk about feelings rather than “seeings” or “hearings”: English is full of phrases based around concepts of touch, and touch can be used either casually or deliberately, sending unspoken messages through actions and deeds. Touch is described as a ‘proximity’ sense: people need to be close to each other or to a surface in order to touch it. Along with taste and smell they are highly developed senses but used less in Western culture than in many others.<sup>51</sup> In our highly mechanized and technologically fast-paced world, people nowadays often lean more into their use of sight and hearing in order to understand their environment than the more ancient reliance on touch.

In the scientific world, there has been significant research on the benefits of touch for mental, physical, and emotional well-being. It has long been known that depriving children of touch can have significant repercussions for their development. Touch therapy is a growing field for medical and psychological research.

Chapter 3 will explore some of these fields in more depth, including how touch affects our bodies, minds, and spirits. In addition, in many professions touch is required in order for a task to be performed (e.g. doctors), or necessary (e.g. teachers who in numerous situations need to touch children). Touch is a powerful tool in the caring and educational realms as well as in building relationships and community, but its misuse can have devastating outcomes for an individual as has been seen in the many recent scandals of misused touch that have come to light. Chapter 3 will conclude with some warnings for clergy. The guidelines in Chapter 5 will offer hopeful suggestions.

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<sup>51</sup> This is a deeply fascinating and complex area. The ritual of touch in different cultures from formal greetings to other cultural mores is another thesis-project.

The new millennium has seen rapid transformations in the way touch is viewed and used in the Global North. Until the rapid changes which hit society post World War II, at least within Western culture, touching others in public would have been governed by strict etiquette and social norms.<sup>52</sup> A polite handshake would be a normal greeting; more demonstrable touch would have been reserved for the privacy of a home.

Touching another person in public has become both more common and more intimate. Touch can be a demonstration of love and affection: look around and see a father cuddling his child, lovers embracing at airport arrivals, friends high-fiving at a football match. Chapman speaks of touch as one of five “love languages.”<sup>53</sup> There are fewer restrictions around what is acceptable in public touch in Western cultures in the twenty-first century.

And, simultaneously, as public touch has become more normalized, so too the opportunities for inappropriate touch have multiplied. Some forms of touch may have become more casual, and more socially acceptable, but the boundaries between inappropriate and appropriate touch within Western society remain largely clear.

Silence surrounding abusive touch has been the norm for millennia, but perhaps one unexpected gift of social media is the increased platform for people to speak out across the spectrum of race and culture, naming and highlighting unhealthy touch. The #metoo and #churchtoo movements have allowed people to speak out about the way they have been hurt or abused in a world where unhealthy touch has, for too long, been hidden and even excused. Knowing you are not alone has helped people to speak out about their

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<sup>52</sup> Until the 1970s, British soccer players were reprimanded for shaking the hand of a goal-scoring teammate; watch a Premier Football league match now and the touch that occurs after a goal is scored!

<sup>53</sup> Gary Chapman and Amy Summers. *The Five Love Languages: How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate* (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Press, 2010).

stories, hoping now to be believed when all too often perpetrators have been the ones who hold the power to silence the abused.

A healthy society needs to operate in ways which are God-honoring and life-affirming. It is essential that employers insist on background checks, that all institutions with responsibility for children have child safety policies, and that schools have appointed officers who do all they can to safeguard students. Child abuse, whether sexual, emotional, or physical, is never acceptable. Clearly, rape and violent sexual touch are totally reprehensible.

The conversation around sexuality and gender has become more vocal in the twenty-first century. A 'hook-up' culture suggests that sexual encounters can be normal in dating. Match and eharmony can be excellent ways of finding new friends and developing relationships, but for some these online dating tools have become ways of facilitating the exploitation of the lonely and vulnerable. The easy availability and social use of legal and illegal drugs in Western culture can reduce a person's capacity to make appropriate choices, and socially acceptable excessive alcohol consumption can also lead to unwise decisions in the moment regarding permitted touch. Many adults are engaging in touch behaviors which are ultimately devaluing their view or sense of their own worth. Some touch is legal and yet may not be healthy, or good for the soul. Often (clearly not always) these encounters can lead to shame and a desire to forget or ignore the behavior. However, as will be noted in chapter 3, our physical bodies hold memories long after specific moments of touch have passed.

Recent movements, such as the excellent movie *Spotlight*, and again the #metoo and #churchtoo hashtags, have begun to address the secrecy and shame which has enabled predators and pedophiles to get away with so much unhealthy and destructive

behavior in the past, and touch has become an important topic of conversation – but, sadly, often for negative reasons both within and outside the church.<sup>54</sup>

Inappropriate touch is something to be very alert to: the scandals which have racked the church, children's institutions, and the entertainment industry are not to be ignored.<sup>55</sup> Clergy are often viewed with some suspicion. The potential for clergy to exploit their positions of trust through inappropriate touch is significant. The power dynamic between a priest and parishioner is fragile, and it is tragic how often there has been clergy failure. The even greater tragedy has been the failure of the church hierarchy to pursue, condemn, and address these abuses. Far too many clergy and churches have been involved in scandalous situations where touch has been misused. Western legal systems do a good job if and when they apprehend and outlaw inappropriate and unwanted touch. Clergy should be beyond reproach when considering touch, but sadly this is not always the case. Clergy misuse of touch will be addressed further in Chapter 3.

The church has struggled for millennia with the repercussions of “unhealthy touch” within and outside the church: especially in the realm of sexual abuse. The current emphasis, both politically and in the media, focused towards child protection and avoidance of sexual harassment is totally appropriate and vitally important and helpful in identifying and, hopefully, reducing inappropriate and unhealthy touch.

However, even while working to eliminate unhealthy touch, this emphasis can lead to fear and suspicion around all touch, which can mean pastors avoid healthy touch

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<sup>54</sup> *Spotlight*, directed by Tom McCarthy (Los Angeles: Open Road Films, 2015).

<sup>55</sup> Some examples: “Paedophile priest investigation turns to regional Western Australia to reveal full extent of child abuse,” June 29, 2018, accessed Nov 20, 2018, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-06-30/paedophile-priest-investigation-in-regional-wa/9923986>. Sadly, this scandal is not one which is unique to either Australia or the church, but is indicative of regular news articles; “Jersey's 'house of horrors' children's home should be demolished, abuse inquiry report concludes,” July 3, 2017, accessed Nov 20, 2018, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/07/03/jerseys-house-horrors-childrens-home-should-demolished-abuse/>.

which can offer significant healing to wounded souls, both in a sacramental and pastoral setting. All churches should now have child protection policies, but all churches should also have guidelines for touching adults in ways that are safe and life-giving. Clergy want to affirm and celebrate the role of touch in the ways in which they relate to their parishioners. How can clergy be mindful and deliberate in their use of healthy touch in pastoral and sacramental settings?

### **Data Gathering Overview**

The thesis of this paper is that clergy would benefit from guidelines for the appropriate use of touch in their ministries: whether they are meeting with others in private, semi-private, or public spaces; whether they have met for counselling, prayer, or are operating out of their priestly functions in sacramental ministry.

### **Method**

The first step to gathering information used was a clergy survey. This survey covers questions surrounding previous and current seminary education on touch, as well as current practice in all areas of their life and work as priests. This was followed by semi-structured interviews for a number of the respondents, exploring their past and current experiences of touch within their ministry. Using these data, guidelines for healthy touch are presented for use in training for Anglican clergy – especially those who are starting out on their careers.

## Scope

Other denominations may have slightly different pastoral and/or sacramental expectations and so this paper focuses on the experiences of clergy in the Anglican Church of North America (ACNA) and more specifically mostly to clergy in the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic (DOMA) who were kind enough to complete the survey.

The ACNA was recognized as a province of the global Anglican Communion in 2009. It unites Anglicans into one body across Canada, the United States, and Mexico. The ACNA plays an active role in the GAFCON movement, and indeed the Archbishop of the ACNA, The Most Rev. Dr. Foley Beach, was elected the new Chairman of the GAFCON movement at the 2018 meeting in Jerusalem.<sup>56</sup>

Theologically, the ACNA self-identifies as orthodox. It holds to a Biblical and historical view of the Christian faith.

Members of the Anglican Church in North America are in the mainstream, both globally and historically, of Christianity – the biblically-faithful way of following Jesus and being part of the “One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.” As Anglicans, this orthodoxy is defined by and centered on our church’s classic formularies – the Book of Common Prayer, including the Ordinal, and the Thirty-nine Articles – which all point back to the authority of the Holy Bible and articulate foundational principles of the Anglican tradition throughout the world. We wholeheartedly embrace the The Jerusalem Declaration, the founding declaration of the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans.<sup>57</sup>

The Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic is a regional diocese of the ACNA led by Bishop John Guernsey, and it consists of 40 Congregations, Missions, and Mission Fellowships.

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<sup>56</sup> “About GAFCON,” accessed Nov 20, 2018, <https://www.gafcon.org/about>.

<sup>57</sup> Anglican Church in North America, “What we stand for,” accessed Nov 20, 2018, <http://www.anglicanchurch.net/index.php/main/About/>.

Geographically the Diocese covers Virginia, Maryland, Washington, D.C., Delaware, and northeastern North Carolina.<sup>58</sup>

### Obstacles

For many clergy, touch is not a matter to which they have paid a great deal of deliberate attention. The survey results, explored in Chapter 4, emphasize this. Most clergy use touch freely in their sacramental and pastoral ministry but without a particular sense of the theological implications or indeed, perhaps, the social, psychological, and physiological. When they are aware of touch, particularly when away from the public arena of the church sanctuary, they may well feel nervous about using touch, concerned by the possibility of any touch being misconstrued. The current focus of media attention across denominations as scandals of abuse are revealed is necessary, but also unnerving for clergy who may worry whether their well-meaning actions could also be condemned. A no-touch policy may feel much safer. As will be shown in Chapter 4, the survey explored the way some clergy are becoming touch-averse as a way of self-protection.

Sadly, it is also true that many clergy will have personal experience of the misuse of touch in their stories. Perhaps they were abused themselves as children, or abusers in their own right. This conversation has the potential to stir up both legitimate and illegitimate shame in respondents. Steve and Sally Breedlove cover these aspects of shame so beautifully in their book, *The Shame Exchange*.<sup>59</sup> A person's capacity to talk about the shame of 'bad touch' in their stories only comes once God has taken them

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<sup>58</sup> Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic – Anglican Church in North America, "Welcome," accessed Nov 20, 2018, <http://www.anglicandoma.org/welcome>.

<sup>59</sup> Steve Breedlove and Sally Breedlove, *The Shame Exchange: Trading Shame for God's Mercy and Freedom* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2009).



through significant personal healing. It is possible that some clergy will not be willing to be open or honest about their unfinished personal work in these areas. In addition, it can also be the case that a person may touch another to satisfy their own needs and not in the best interests of the one who is touched.<sup>60</sup> This is something therapists are always urged to be mindful of and is equally important for clergy.<sup>61</sup>

Research on touch in the church has been generally focused on discussions around the use of touch in the sacraments. There is limited material on the use of touch in pastoral settings. However, within the scientific community there is significant research on the benefit of positive touch for psychological, physical, and mental well-being. This is discussed in Chapter 3.

### Research Questions

This thesis-project addresses these five research questions:

RQ1. How aware are clergy of the importance of healthy touch, both in pastoral and sacramental settings? Have they received any training promoting awareness and the benefits of healthy touch?

RQ2. Do clergy have experiences or fears of unhealthy touch which prejudice them away from good touch?

RQ3. Is it possible in this day and age to have healthy touch without undue risk?

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<sup>60</sup> MinistrySafe, the child safety training which the ACNA promotes, does an excellent job of helping those who work with children in churches identify places of vulnerability where they may seek to serve their own needs rather than that of the child.

<sup>61</sup> A useful summary of guidelines is given in Carlos Durana, "The Use of Touch in Psychotherapy: Ethical and Clinical Guidelines," *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training* 35, no. 2 (1998): 269–280.

RQ4. Clergy are in a very vulnerable position both to transgress and also to be falsely accused. What policies does their church have for sexual harassment?

RQ5. What policies, guidelines, and procedures are in place in their churches to allow for healthy touch?

### Data Gathering

The questionnaire covered the following areas:<sup>62</sup>

- a) Clergy theological training. What, if any, guidance or instruction did they receive in their seminary training to prepare them for healthy touch in either the realm of pastoral care or sacramental ministry?
- b) Clergy experience of Sacramental touch. Sacramental touch occurs in many areas: baptism, weddings (binding the hands), funerals (commendation of the body), Eucharist (giving of the elements), praying for the sick and dying (anointing with oil in the presence of others), ordination/other commissioning (laying on of hands), etc. There is minimal concern, as these are very public, that these are places of risk for the touch recipient, but priests should be aware of how much importance there is within the moment of touch. The physical act itself brings important connection and an opportunity for God to work in mysterious and wonderful ways. However, even this touch can be problematic at times for those who have been abused or who have developed a fear or phobia to touch. Priests need to be aware of this possibility and

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<sup>62</sup> See Appendix A for full questionnaire.

be careful in over-confidence in sacramental touch. This question asked clergy to consider their awareness of these moments of touch.

- c) Clergy experience of pastoral touch. Pastoral touch is much more ‘risky’, and yet contains potential for so much blessing. Clergy were asked for their experiences and understanding of the benefits of touch, their willingness to be accountable, and any hard lessons learned.
- d) The guidelines produced reflect concerns raised in this research, and include touch guidelines for clergy in public, semi-private, and private meetings in their pastoral, prayer, and sacramental roles. The guidelines also offer advice to Seminaries and Anglican churches.

### **Conclusion**

Healthy touch helps humans to thrive. As the church seeks to reach out to a hurting world with the love of Christ, it needs to pay careful attention to the ways of engagement, offering healing not harm. The incarnate Christ offers a model example of modes of reaching out to others that are life-affirming and that draw attention to the reality of a relationship with God. There are solid Biblical, scientific, and experiential grounds for developing modes of touch that are conducive to healthy touch, which will be explored in the next two chapters.

## CHAPTER TWO THE THEOLOGY OF TOUCH

That which was from the beginning, which we...have touched with our hands,  
concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest.

—1 John 1:1-2

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

—John 1:14

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents a theological overview of touch and what the implications are for Christians, and clergy in particular, as they use touch in their ministry, through the use of two Gospel stories: Jesus healing the woman with bleeding and raising Jairus' daughter from death. The two stories are recorded in three of the gospels – Mark 5:22-43, Luke 8:40-56, and Matthew 9:18-26. Before looking at them in detail, their context and boundaries will be examined and placed in the larger Biblical narrative.

These stories reveal eight aspects of Jesus' ministry and character. These are examined in turn, initially directly from these stories, but then set into a broader Biblical framework considering the implications for a theology of touch. The chapter concludes with a brief look at the history of healing through touch in the church and the implications for Christians, and clergy in particular, in sacramental, prayer, and pastoral ministry as they follow Jesus in today's culture.

### **Jesus and Touch**

#### **The Pericopes: Biblical Context and Boundaries**

All three Synoptic Gospels include these two stories of healing in the same intercalated format and, essentially, in the same narrative setting. Matthew includes

additional material between the healing of the demoniac and these stories, but this is not incompatible with Mark and Luke's accounts (which are almost identical barring minor changes in wording). When considering the placement of the stories in the text, Augustine notes that the word "then" in Mark 5:22 does not necessarily imply "immediately," suggesting that chronologically the incident in Matthew 9:14-17 could have occurred after Jesus was back on shore and before the approach of Jairus.<sup>1</sup> The placement of the stories in both Mark and Luke indicates a clear progression in establishing Jesus' authority over all things, including authority over nature (calming the storm, e.g. Mark 4:35-41), demons (healing the demoniac, e.g. Mark 5:1-20), sickness (healing the bleeding woman), and death (raising Jairus' daughter).<sup>2</sup>

These passages include three touch encounters: Jairus at Jesus' feet, the woman touches Jesus' hem, and Jesus touches the girl's hand. In addition, the parallels between the two stories include the contrast between fear and faith, the mention of twelve years, the phrase "daughter," the sense of desperation, and the healing touch of Jesus.

Almost immediately after these events, Jesus commissions his disciples. He "gave them authority and power over all demons and to cure diseases."<sup>3</sup> Having provided a model for ministry, he sends his disciples out to follow in his footsteps; and Christians today are sent out as well.

The Gospel accounts all begin with Jairus approaching Jesus.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Augustine, *The Harmony of the Gospels, Book II*, New Advent, accessed December 18, 2018, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1602228.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> The Christological emphasis is particularly marked in Luke.

<sup>3</sup> Luke 9:1. Parallel passages in Matthew 10:1, Mark 6:7-13.

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 9:18-19; Mark 5: 22-23a; Luke 8:40-42.

## Jesus has Authority

Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue in Capernaum, a man of local authority and power, comes and throws himself at Jesus' feet, asking the teacher to come and touch – and thereby heal – his dying 12-year-old daughter.<sup>5</sup> Jairus' faith in Jesus' capacity to heal through laying on his hands is unquestioning.<sup>6</sup> For all his earthly authority, Jairus knows that neither he, nor the High Priest, nor physicians can heal his daughter now, but he recognizes that Jesus can, and so he kneels humbly before him.

Jesus begins to go with him, taking his disciples, but the crowd presses against him and suddenly Jesus stops. Despite his position of authority, Jairus does not attempt to interrupt or intervene whilst Jesus interacts with a woman (perhaps someone he has known and avoided for years).<sup>7</sup> Jesus lingers as the woman tells him her whole story, and, meanwhile, Jairus' daughter dies.<sup>8</sup> This ultimately leads to an opportunity for Jairus' faith to grow.<sup>9</sup> Throughout these accounts, Jesus is repeatedly shown as the one who decides what needs to be done and when, demonstrating his authority – as appropriate for the incarnate son of God. Jairus' behavior clearly indicates that he was yielding his position to Jesus' authority. Only Jesus Christ had the authority over sickness and death that Jairus sought for his daughter, the same authority and power that the woman with the bleeding

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<sup>5</sup> Mark 5:22.

<sup>6</sup> Matthew records him as saying, "My daughter has just died" (Matthew 9:18). Mark says she is "on the point of death" (Mark 5:23). Luke simply states that she "is dying" (Luke 8: 42).

<sup>7</sup> Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1997), 345.

<sup>8</sup> Mark 5:33.

<sup>9</sup> William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), 196.

seeks.<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, there are other occasions, such as with the Centurion's servant, that Jesus could command healing at a distance.<sup>11</sup> However, the normal way of healing for Jesus was accompanied by touch, either by himself, or by those who came to him, as in case of the woman with the bleeding.

### **Jesus is the Great High Priest and his Holiness is Contagious**

The woman in the crowd touches Jesus – probably one of many sick people who brushed against Jesus in the crowd that day. Augustine remarked on this passage, “Few are they who by faith touch him; multitudes are they who throng about him.”<sup>12</sup> She touches the hem of his garment, as a deliberate act of faith.<sup>13</sup> In Judean thought, “Disease and misfortune [are] God’s punishments for sin and disobedience of his law, and health and prosperity blessings [are] from God in response to repentance and recommitment to his law.”<sup>14</sup> Her ill-health would have been seen by her neighbors – including Jairus – as a punishment from God. Her hope is that her contact with Jesus will bring her restoration both physically and socially. One immediately obvious aspect to this account is that it is the woman who reaches out to touch Jesus, and not Jesus who touches her.

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<sup>10</sup> Matthew 9:20-22; Mark 5:24b-34; Luke 8:42b-48.

<sup>11</sup> Matthew 18:13.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas C. Oden and Christopher A. Hall, eds., *Mark*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 75.

<sup>13</sup> An interesting dimension to the discussion of the positive effect of faith in healing can be seen in contemporary, secular research in numerous health fields. Paul Illingworth lists numerous studies that have found a positive correlation between a patient's faith and the speed and longevity of their healing. Paul Illingworth, “Faith: an untapped mental health nursing resource,” *Mental Health Nursing* 28, no. 4 (2008): 9-11.

<sup>14</sup> Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 33.

All three gospels record that this unnamed woman has suffered a discharge of blood for twelve years.<sup>15</sup> Mark and Luke include that she has spent all her money on physicians who were unable to cure her, Mark adding that she had deteriorated under their care. Luke reinforces that nobody could heal her. Her disease is the manifesting problem. Although the Greek is not completely clear as to the nature of the discharge, scholars generally agree that the words used would imply a vaginal discharge, invoking the Levitical laws for impurity, particularly Leviticus 15:25-27. She was a *zaba*, unclean and in need of ritual purification.<sup>16</sup>

Yet she deliberately reaches out and touches the hem of his cloak. She knows – we do not know how – that Jesus is a source of healing, for she said to herself, “If I only

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<sup>15</sup> Feminist theologians have invested considerable energy in deconstructing this passage, mainly concerned about the view of the impurity of the woman, e.g. Susan Haber, “A Woman’s Touch: Feminist Encounters with the Hemorrhaging Woman in Mark 5.24-34,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 26, no. 2 (December 2003): 171-190. This paper highlights a number of studies including those by Marla Selvidge, Leonard Swidler, Karen Barta, and Mary Rose D’Angelo, and the Jewish laws which highlight this aspect of a woman’s life. However, there are also many laws in Leviticus that discuss the impurity of men in different circumstances, though admittedly none of them are around perfectly normal physical occurrences, such as menstruation. Haber, herself, focuses on the fact that the woman is not described as “the impure woman” but as the hemorrhaging woman and thus the focus is not on her lack of cleanliness, but on her ill-health (Susan Haber, “A Woman’s Touch,” 173); though, there are clear implications regarding her purity as a result of her bleeding. Levine argues with great vigor that the emphasis here is not on Jesus overturning purity laws but on addressing the needs of an individual who is suffering a long-term illness; Amy-Jill Levine, “Discharging Responsibility: Matthean Jesus, Biblical Law, and Hemorrhaging Woman,” in *A Feminist Companion to Matthew*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 70-83. Undoubtedly he does do that, though clearly with scant regard for the purity laws. There is no reference to the purity laws in any of the gospel records of this event. There is an underlying implication, and the word used for her bleeding would imply a lack of purity, though it is clearly not the emphasis of the story.

<sup>16</sup> The Levitical law emphasizes that washing can result in cleansing. However, Numbers 5:1-4 goes further and excludes those who are suffering from any form of impurity from the camp (Susan Haber, “A Woman’s Touch,” 176). On the whole, the Levitical law was more lenient for women; Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 902-943. It is worth noting that scholars cannot agree as to which of these laws would have been more likely to affect a woman in the second Temple period as the traditions are somewhat contradictory. Josephus states that those who are unclean, specifically menstruating women or those with a discharge, could not enter the temple; Louis H. Feldman and John R. Levison, eds., *Josephus’ Contra Apionem: Studies in Its Character and Context with a Latin Concordance to the Portion Missing in Greek* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1996), 329, 333. However, this may not have unduly restricted the woman, as reasons for her to go to the temple were probably limited.



touch his garment, I will be made well.”<sup>17</sup> The fringe or hem of his garment referred to is the *kraspedon*, the blue tassel that symbolized a Jewish man’s obedience to the law.<sup>18</sup> Hence, the woman touched the part of Jesus’ clothing that showed his ritual purity. Jesus can be described as having ‘contagious holiness,’ far from him becoming unclean when she touches him, he instead heals her. This is reminiscent of Ezekiel recording that the High Priests were told, “When they go out into the outer court to the people, they shall put off the garments in which they have been ministering and lay them in the holy chambers. And they shall put on other garments, lest they transmit holiness to the people with their garments.”<sup>19</sup> In this case, Jesus’ garments transmit holiness, revealing one of the qualities of a High Priest. High Priests in the Old Testament would regularly use touch to bless, anoint and offer sacrifices, to make atonements (laying their hands on the heads of animals before immolation and on the scapegoat that it might bear the sins of the people).<sup>20</sup> In the death and resurrection of Jesus, the ultimate fulfilment of these actions is seen: he bore the sins of the world as both Priest and sacrifice. Hence, Jesus is seen as High Priest through the touch of his clothes, his hands, and ultimately, in his death and resurrection.

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<sup>17</sup> Matthew 9:21.

<sup>18</sup> Matthew George Easton, *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, s.v. hem, accessed December 18, 2018, <https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/eastons-bible-dictionary/hem.html>. Cf. Numbers 15:37-41. When Luke and Matthew refer to the woman reaching out to touch the tassel, perhaps they were thinking about the verse, “Thus says the LORD of hosts: In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you’” (Zechariah 8:23). Some interpreters contend that this verse was fulfilled at Pentecost, but Bromley introduces the possibility that this moment may have been a partial fulfilment of this prophetic word. See Donald H. Bromley, “The Healing of the Hemorrhaging Woman: Miracle or Magic?”, accessed December 18, 2018, <http://www.biblicaltheology.com/Research/BromleyD01.pdf>, 14.

<sup>19</sup> Ezekiel 44:19. God also instructs Moses to make anointing oil which he then places on the temple and all its accoutrements: “You shall consecrate them, that they may be most holy. Whatever touches them will become holy,” Exodus 30:29. Once again Jesus is revealed as a fulfilment of an Old Testament promise.

<sup>20</sup> Exodus 29; Leviticus 8:9; 16:21.

## Jesus is Healer

Luke and Mark indicate that healing was immediate on the woman's touch.<sup>21</sup> Matthew on the other hand reverses the order, "Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, 'Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.' And instantly the woman was made well."<sup>22</sup> Perhaps Matthew was less inclined to raise the possibility that Jesus did not know what was happening? However, all three accounts are clear that she was healed once she had touched Jesus' hem. And not only was she physically healed, but by the way that he drew attention to her, he enabled her to be socially healed as well. A public announcement of healing and acceptance by Jesus was vital to her social reintegration.

As Jesus travelled the area, there are other instances of people touching his garment and being healed.<sup>23</sup> The gospels include at least fourteen episodes where Jesus reaches out to touch somebody, either as part of the process of healing them or simply with compassion.<sup>24</sup> Mark's gospel in particular emphasizes the nature of Christ as healer, with thirteen out of eighteen miraculous events including some form of healing, whether deliverance or restoration to health.<sup>25</sup> The emphasis on Christ as a healer is indicative of the in-breaking kingdom of God.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Luke 8:44; Mark 5:29.

<sup>22</sup> Matthew 9:22.

<sup>23</sup> Matthew 14:35-36; Mark 6:56; Luke 6:19.

<sup>24</sup> E.g. Matthew 8:3, 22; 9:29.

<sup>25</sup> Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity*, 32.

<sup>26</sup> Christopher D Marshall, *Faith as a Theme in Mark's Narrative* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 59. Also in Acts we see healing in other places where people reach out: first to Peter's shadow (Acts 5:14-15), and then to Paul's handkerchiefs and aprons (Acts 19:11-12). Healing was a vibrant part of the life of the early church and Acts and the Epistles brim with examples.

Other healing miracles include the healing of Peter's mother-in-law through Jesus' touch.<sup>27</sup> Often the individuals that he touches are ritually unclean, such as when he touches and heals lepers.<sup>28</sup> He also often touches the afflicted area, e.g. touching the eyes of the blind.<sup>29</sup> Even as he was arrested on the Mount of Olives, Jesus was quick to heal the severed ear of the High Priest's servant.<sup>30</sup>

Jesus' compassion for the privacy of the individual is notable in two other healing stories: the first is when he takes the deaf man aside in Mark 7:33-35, and touches and thereby heals his ears and tongue; the second in Mark 8:22-25 was the healing of another blind man through touching his eyes twice. With the woman who was bleeding, public attention was vital to her story as her affliction had rendered her a social outcast. As always, Jesus displays remarkable understanding of the deepest needs for healing.

Healing using touch is clearly an important part of the ministry of Jesus. Touch offers a connection with people who may through their illness have experienced so much disconnection from society: often labelled as a pariah or outcast, unable to mingle freely as their diseases made them unclean. Jesus' willingness to touch would heal not only the physical trauma but also the emotional, allowing the individual to be known, seen, and met in their distress.

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<sup>27</sup> Matthew 8:14-15.

<sup>28</sup> Matthew 8:3; Luke 5:13.

<sup>29</sup> Matthew 9:27-30; 20:29-34.

<sup>30</sup> Luke 22:50-51.

## Jesus is Human

In Luke, the incident with the woman shows Christ's humanity. The question "who touched me?" indicates that he did not always know all things.<sup>31</sup> Some scholars have suggested that he pretended not to know – but this would imply an unlikely disingenuousness on Jesus' part.<sup>32</sup> Matthew does not include the question.

The gospels frequently reveal the humanity of Christ as he moved with reassurance and compassion in a hurting world, his touch restoring hope and showing love. People brought their children to Jesus to be blessed.<sup>33</sup> On the mount of transfiguration the disciples were terrified and Jesus comforts them with a touch.<sup>34</sup> After the resurrection, Jesus appeared and urged the disciples, and specifically Thomas, to touch him to prove his physical body had been raised: he recognized their human frailty because he too was human and he knew the need to touch to believe, embodying belief.<sup>35</sup> He himself was often touched in a way which brought comfort to him: whether through his friend John leaning against his breast at the last supper, or the woman who bathed his feet with her tears, hair, and costly ointment.<sup>36</sup> Jesus also blessed the children who were brought to him through laying on of hands.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Luke 8:45.

<sup>32</sup> Donald H. Bromley, "The Healing of the Hemorrhaging Woman," 17.

<sup>33</sup> Mark 10:13-16.

<sup>34</sup> Matthew 17:6-7.

<sup>35</sup> Luke 24:39; John 20:27.

<sup>36</sup> Luke 7:37-39.

<sup>37</sup> Mark 10:16. In the New Testament the apostles used the laying on of hands to convey the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17, 8:19, 19:6), as well as to signify the giving of leadership authority within the church (Matthew 13; Acts 6:6; 13:3; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6). For more on this, see Patrick Morrisroe, "Imposition of Hands," *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Co, 1910), accessed December 18, 2018, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07698a.htm>.

Jesus instituted the most memorable aspect of his touch when at the last supper he washed his disciples' feet before he broke bread and poured the wine.<sup>38</sup> Foot washing was generally reserved as a task for the lowliest of servants. Christ removing his robe and kneeling before his disciples would have been disconcerting and, in all probability, shocking to those gathered. However, it was central to Christ's message of humility that he sets this example, "Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him."<sup>39</sup> Having taught them with words, Jesus now provided a tangible and memorable physical action to remind them of the message. Taking their grubby, smelly, dusty feet into his hands, lovingly cleaning and drying them, he reminded them that their task was to serve and that he was leading the way.

As he broke bread and poured wine that night, Christ instituted a meal which has been repeated throughout the centuries: Christ's touch becoming a model for the touch of priests on the bread and the wine through the ages as they ask God to send the Holy Spirit at the moment of epiclesis.

In the eucharistic meal we have a profound moment of seeing the Holy Spirit working through the touch of Christ. It was when he repeated the breaking of bread at the home of the two men on the road to Emmaus that their eyes were opened.<sup>40</sup> The deep symbolism of the moment stirring their memories so that suddenly they were able to see that the stranger was indeed the Christ. Once again, Jesus, through his humanity, recognized the need for us to have physical means of remembering such as in regular eating and drinking at the communion table. He knew that people need to touch to

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<sup>38</sup> John 13:3-17.

<sup>39</sup> John 13:16.

<sup>40</sup> Luke 24:30-31.

believe, to comfort, to show and receive love, and to remember.<sup>41</sup> The way our bodies help us to remember will be explored further in Chapter 3.

### **Jesus and the Holy Spirit Work Together**

Clearly, Jesus turned towards the woman with the bleeding for a reason. Mark alone speaks of the power, “And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, ‘Who touched my garments?’”<sup>42</sup> Jesus felt that power (δυναμιν) had gone out from him.<sup>43</sup> This phrase has led some to question whether this was an act of God or simply some sort of magic?<sup>44</sup> The flow of healing power, which Jesus did not appear to control and which did not require any particular effort on his part, seems to imply a magical quality.<sup>45</sup>

Bromley suggests this stems from the view in Greek philosophy that δυναμιν in this sense “is a neutral substance, which can be transmitted like any other material.”<sup>46</sup> However, far from supporting a magical viewpoint, Mark emphasizes that the transmission of healing power was due not to the woman’s touch per se but to her faith in

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<sup>41</sup> An excellent exploration of the role our physical bodies play in helping us to experience emotion is found in Chapters 4 and 5 of Bessel A. Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (New York: Viking, 2014).

<sup>42</sup> Mark 5:30.

<sup>43</sup> Strong’s Greek dictionary gives the following definition: “force (literally or figuratively); specially, miraculous power (usually by implication, a miracle itself):--ability, abundance, meaning, might(-ily, -y, -y deed), (worker of) miracle(-s), power, strength, violence, mighty (wonderful) work.” “King James Bible Strong’s Greek Dictionary,” accessed December 18, 2018, <http://www.sacrednamebible.com/kjvstrongs/STRGRK14.htm>, s.v. 1411 “δυναμις.”

<sup>44</sup> John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus: Volume Two—Mentor, Message, and Miracles* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 709.

<sup>45</sup> Donald H. Bromley, “The Healing of the Hemorrhaging Woman,” 2.

<sup>46</sup> Donald H. Bromley, “The Healing of the Hemorrhaging Woman,” 4.

what Jesus could do, and who he was.<sup>47</sup> It is Jesus who immediately says, “your faith has made you well.”<sup>48</sup> Luke goes further when he records Jesus as asking, “who touched me?” drawing attention to himself as the source of healing, rather than to his clothing.<sup>49</sup>

The Holy Spirit is apparent here working through Jesus to heal the woman. Bromley concludes, “The woman was healed by the power of God’s Holy Spirit, residing in Jesus, upon her act of faith.... While Jesus is not aware of who touched him or why, the Holy Spirit is, and acts on his (the Holy Spirit’s) own volition.”<sup>50</sup> As Dunn notes, it was the faith of others that was important to Jesus. “He always saw himself as the vehicle of God’s power to others – anointed to proclaim, to heal.”<sup>51</sup>

From the moment of his baptism, Jesus worked with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is with him from the initial desert temptations, throughout Jesus’ ministry in the healing miracles, and ultimately on the cross, in the resurrection, at Pentecost, and in the breaking of bread. Jesus empowers the disciples with the Holy Spirit at the Great Commission. When Jesus touches, the Holy Spirit is always at work.

## **Jesus Responds to Faith**

Jesus questions the woman, and then, “He said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has

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<sup>47</sup> Donald H. Bromley, “The Healing of the Hemorrhaging Woman,” 4.

<sup>48</sup> Mark 5:34.

<sup>49</sup> Donald H. Bromley, “The Healing of the Hemorrhaging Woman,” 7.

<sup>50</sup> Donald H. Bromley, “The Healing of the Hemorrhaging Woman,” 19. The emphasis on power in Luke’s gospel is often in the context of Jesus dealing with evil, and this case is no exception. The use of power implies a battle that requires force for victory. Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 315.

<sup>51</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1997), 75.

made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”<sup>52</sup> Mark uses the term σοζω for being *healed* (Greek “saved”) implying not only healing for her body but also for her soul.<sup>53</sup> Elsewhere Mark uses verbs that simply mean “heal,” so here he is clearly wanting to communicate a holistic healing for the woman. Jesus’ words to the woman imply that the health she has found is that of salvation, “complete restoration or healing of a believer’s body, soul and spirit.”<sup>54</sup> Her faith means that she has been healed, but even more she is now a part of God’s family. Her faith was the means whereby she obtained Jesus’ help. It expressed belief that Jesus *could* heal her and hope that he *would*.

A significant moment of healing for Jesus where he does not use touch is in the healing of the Centurion’s servant. Here the centurion explicitly rules out the need for touch, asking Jesus simply to say the word. This level of faith was unusual in the encounters Jesus had with people, and Jesus is amazed by it.<sup>55</sup> From Jesus’ reaction, it is clear that he understood that for most people, touch was a vital part of any healing miracle. The example of Thomas is pertinent here, where Jesus encouraged him to see and touch in order to believe.<sup>56</sup> Jesus recognizes the needs of most of his people for tangible signs to build their faith.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Mark 5:34. The statement “go in peace” is a standard farewell, but the final phrase could well have implied that she needed now to fulfill the purification rituals as in Leviticus 15:19-30. This would be in line with the instructions Jesus gave the leper in Mark 1:44 (Susan Haber, “A Woman’s Touch,” 185). The conclusion is that although she is cured, she is not yet restored; Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 347.

<sup>53</sup> Kenneth Samuel Wuest, *Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English Reader* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978), 113.

<sup>54</sup> Gary P. Stewart and John Kilner, eds., *Basic Questions on Alternative Medicine: What Is Good and What Is Not?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1998), 11–12.

<sup>55</sup> Matthew 8:10.

<sup>56</sup> John 20:27.

<sup>57</sup> The story of Naaman (2 Kings 5) is another example of someone who struggled to understand that submitting his body to the Lord’s command was a vital part of his healing.



## **Jesus and the Father are One**

Having healed the woman, Jesus calls her “daughter,” the only place in the Gospels this happens.<sup>58</sup> Elsewhere Jesus says, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.”<sup>59</sup> Her identity is transformed from an outcast with an unclean condition, to a beloved daughter, with Jesus explicitly aligning himself with the Father.<sup>60</sup>

Jesus is now ready to move on and he urges Jairus to exercise the faith that was so apparent when he first arrived, despite the news that his daughter has died.

## **Jesus Conquers Death**

Jairus’ daughter neither asks for nor expects to be touched by Jesus. She is a 12-year-old girl, with no personal status and, what is more, she is dead by the time Jesus reaches her.<sup>61</sup> When he arrives, the mourners are in full swing – as would be fitting for the daughter of a local ruler – with flute players and much noisy mourning.<sup>62</sup>

Despite the mockery of the crowd, Jesus enters, taking only the parents and three of the disciples with him. He reaches out and holds the girl’s hand. The word used for this touch is a strong one meaning “to become master of, to take hold of,” indicating a strong, confident grip.<sup>63</sup> Jesus is again in contact with someone who is unclean. The laws

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<sup>58</sup> Mark 5:34. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, eds., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 124-126.

<sup>59</sup> John 14:9.

<sup>60</sup> Susan Haber, “A Woman’s Touch,” 184.

<sup>61</sup> There is clear parallelism in Luke with the story of the raising from the dead of the widow of Nain’s son in Luke 7:11-17. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I–IX* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 744.

<sup>62</sup> Matthew 9:23; Mark 5:38. Warren W. Wiersbe, *Volume One: Matthew—Galatians*, *The Bible Exposition Commentary: New Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), s.v. “Mark 5:35.”

<sup>63</sup> Kenneth Samuel Wuest, *Mark*, 117.

concerning the impurity of a corpse are far clearer and more stringent than those surrounding the hemorrhaging woman.<sup>64</sup> However, Jesus again exercises his contagious holiness. Touched by the one who brings healing, she is not resurrected from the dead in an eternal sense but brought to life, ready to play, grow, and learn with her peers.<sup>65</sup> The instruction to feed her confirms that she was not just alive, but well enough to eat.<sup>66</sup>

Jesus is recorded as raising a number of individuals from the dead, two by his touch: Jairus' daughter and the widow's son where he touches the bier before speaking to the dead young man and Lazarus by his word.<sup>67</sup> Ultimately, however, these are simply resuscitations, a temporary return to life. The fatal blow to death is only complete on Easter morning when Jesus is resurrected from the dead and victory is secured.<sup>68</sup>

## Summary

In conclusion, we see how the human touch of Jesus came with authority and contagious holiness to heal, as he worked with the Holy Spirit in response to the faith of those he encountered – breaking in through time and space to restore wholeness out of

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<sup>64</sup> Numbers 19:11-21. Susan Haber, "A Woman's Touch," 187. Haber cites Philo, Josephus, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the rabbinic texts all highlighting the rigorous application of these laws in the Second Temple Period.

<sup>65</sup> It is worth noting that whenever Jesus raises someone from the dead, he addresses them directly, cf. Luke 7:14; John 11:43 (J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, eds., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 124-126). Later when Peter raises Dorcas to life (Acts 9:40), he uses almost the same words – "Tabitha kum!" – referencing the power that he uses is the same that Jesus used in this story.

<sup>66</sup> Kenneth Samuel Wuest, *Mark*, 118.

<sup>67</sup> Luke 7:14-15; John 11:43.

<sup>68</sup> Touch was used elsewhere to restore life: Elijah (1 Kings 17) and Elisha (2 Kings 4) both raised children to life using physical touch, but they had to exert considerably more effort and spend more time doing so than Jesus did. Perhaps the most surprising record of restoration of life through touch comes in 2 Kings where the body of a dead man is tossed into Elisha's grave by a band of robbers: "...and as the man touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood on his feet" (2 Kings 13:21).

brokenness. Jesus always worked in conjunction with his Heavenly Father and we see not only his touch bringing temporary healing to individuals he met, but ultimately his obedience to the touch of his Father led him to give his physical life up on the cross that we might live. The significance of touch in these miracles indicates the ways in which Jesus identified with the individuals. He responded with authority, compassion, and tender humanity. He stood as one with his Father, responding quickly to the faith of those who sought him. This breath of new life for individuals was a foretaste of the new heaven and the new earth, and ushered in the beginnings of the Kingdom of God on earth. How then has the church used and valued touch over the centuries in this time of the “now and not yet”?

### **Clergy and Touch**

#### **Clergy Authority comes through Ordination**

There are many miraculous healings in the Bible, and the disciples are commissioned to follow Christ’s example in healing. In contemporary Western society, healings occur in the name of Christ in many settings. Often, however, prayers for healing are accompanied by touch in the form of the laying on of hands and anointing with oil. All Christians are invited to pray for others; however, clergy in the ACNA, at their ordination, are invested – by the laying on of hands by their Bishop – with a spiritual authority which they are called on to exercise in ministry to others, as they represent Christ under the authority of that Bishop. The ritual of ordination, as it is today, dates back to the second century, initially with reference to the installation of Bishops. However, by the third century the writings of Hippolytus indicate additional offices.<sup>69</sup> “A

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<sup>69</sup> Cheslyn Jones and Geoffrey Wainwright, *The Study of Liturgy* (London: SPCK, 2008), 351.

presbyter is ordained by the bishop laying his hand on his head, with the presbyters also touching him. The prayer asks that the candidate may have a share in the spirit of grace and counsel of the presbyterate and govern the people of God.”<sup>70</sup> From the second century, the Eucharist would be celebrated by the Bishop, but by the ninth century this had become the role of the presbyter or priest.<sup>71</sup>

In the ACNA Canon law, Canon 4, Section 1 states, “The Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion shall be administered by the duly ordained Clergy of this Church with their order of ministry.”<sup>72</sup> Section 3 of the same canon states, “Presiding at the Celebration of the Holy Communion is reserved for Bishops and Presbyters.”<sup>73</sup>

In addition, Canon 8 stresses the ethical and moral responsibility of clergy and laity, “Clergy and lay leaders of this Church are called to be exemplary in all spheres of morality as a condition of being appointed or remaining in office.”<sup>74</sup>

These layers of authority lie behind every touch of a clergyperson. There is an expectation and hope that they stand with integrity before their communities. As disciples and followers of Christ, they associate with a high calling and need to be careful to honor that position.

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<sup>70</sup> Cheslyn Jones and Geoffrey Wainwright, *The Study of Liturgy*, 353.

<sup>71</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (New York: Continuum, 2007), 592.

<sup>72</sup> “The Anglican Church in North America Constitution and Canons,” June 2009, accessed December 18, 2018, [http://www.anglicanchurch.net/media/Proposed\\_Amended\\_CC.pdf](http://www.anglicanchurch.net/media/Proposed_Amended_CC.pdf), 11.

<sup>73</sup> “Constitution and Canons,” 12.

<sup>74</sup> “Constitution and Canons,” 14.

## Touch with Healing Prayer

The development of a theology of healing touch over the centuries has seen Christian communities responding in a variety of ways, initially, with enthusiasm in the first few centuries of the church, where healing was seen as a natural and normal part of being a Christian. A lively expectation in healing also accompanied the early monastic movement, the development of medicine and Christian hospitals, and the science of medicine with such mystical scholars as Hildegard of Bingen.<sup>75</sup>

Jesus frequently used healing touch as a tool to teach about himself, and similarly, healing has been a powerful evangelistic tool over the centuries from the initial actions of the disciples through the days of the early church. Indeed, Augustine argued that Jesus' miracles attested to his transcendent reality, whilst the theologians in the East were more interested in the mystical encounter, through the miraculous, with the power and transformative nature of the Holy Spirit.<sup>76</sup> This idea of a mystical encounter took root in the imaginations of believers, and over the centuries the increasingly superstitious practices of venerating relics, or touching statues, became prevalent. The hope that a miracle would be more forthcoming if one touched a supposedly "holy" item became entrenched in the Roman Catholic Church, and the buying and selling of relics (and indulgences) as a profitable business, not only for the seller but also for the church who licensed these sales (for a fee).<sup>77</sup> A reaction to this was a critical aspect of the Reformation.

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<sup>75</sup> Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity*, 50, 73-74.

<sup>76</sup> Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity*, 23.

<sup>77</sup> "The moment the money tinkles in the collecting box, a soul flies out of purgatory." This slogan was preached pre-Reformation to encourage the purchasing of relics and indulgences. Owen Chadwick, *The Reformation* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 43.

Luther and Calvin were both so cautious about the Catholic Church's exploitation of the miraculous that they suggested that the age of the miraculous had died with the apostles.<sup>78</sup> Their preference was to argue for a Pauline concept of faith coming from hearing and obeying the word. This influence was strong in the Protestant movement, and perhaps coupled with the desire to avoid superstition, led also to an avoidance of much that was, at its root, good about touch. This move away from a trust or hope in the possibility of the miraculous, coupled with an emphasis on reason in the Enlightenment, led to a drastically diminished emphasis on healing in the church during and after the Reformation.

The Historical Jesus movement also largely downplayed the relevance of the healings for Christians today. Whilst not necessarily refuting the fact that Jesus healed miraculously, its emphasis on rationalism led to a reduction in the significance of the healing narrative.<sup>79</sup> Bultmann took this one step further and argued for an "existential understanding of the gospel message and symbolic interpretations of the healing activities and other miracles attributed to Jesus."<sup>80</sup>

However, more recent times have seen a renewed emphasis on the evangelistic nature of healing, for example, as Pentecostalism has swept Africa.<sup>81</sup> As Wilkinson notes, "Healing of the body is never purely physical, and the salvation of the soul is never purely spiritual, but both are combined in the salvation of the whole man."<sup>82</sup> Today there

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<sup>78</sup> Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity*, 24-25.

<sup>79</sup> Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity*, 24-25.

<sup>80</sup> Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity*, 27.

<sup>81</sup> Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity*, 125-126.

<sup>82</sup> John Wilkinson, *Health and Healing: Studies in New Testament Principles and Practice* (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1980), 33.

is a fresh resurgence of healing ministry in the West. Notable proponents of a Christian healing ministry include Leanne Payne, Colin Urquhart, Francis and Judith McNutt, and Nigel Mumford. These, and many more, seek to convey the healing touch of Christ through prayer, anointing with oil, and the laying on of hands.

Touch is also integral to many other religious moments, whether in a rare and glorious moment of pomp and circumstance at a royal coronation, through to the weekly sacramental moment of touching the bread and wine in a Eucharistic setting.<sup>83</sup> Touch speaks to a universal need. However, as has been noted, it is not without the potential for misuse. It is viewed very differently in different cultures, and clearly has a spiritual dimension which can be used or abused even in pastoral settings.

### Clergy Touch in Pastoral Care

Having looked at Jesus' use of touch and what it represented in his ministry, what are the implications for the ways clergy use touch in pastoral ministry in western culture?<sup>84</sup> There are some aspects of touch that are universal, whether it is forceful touch as in chastisement or fighting; a gentle touch of nurture, comfort, encouragement, or reassurance; protective touch; sexual touch; or a simple loving touch. When people touch, they indicate connection with another person – a physical reminder that the other person is acknowledged and they are being responded to in some way.<sup>85</sup> Touch is the first sense

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<sup>83</sup> In addition, it should be noted that touch is used extensively and in many varied ways in all cultures and religious settings around the world, this is beyond the scope of this paper.

<sup>84</sup> Gabriele Alex speaks of the very different use touch plays in Indian culture. Gabriele Alex, "A Sense of Belonging and Exclusion: 'Touchability' and 'Untouchability' in Tamil Nadu," *Ethnos* 73, no. 4 (December 2008): 523–543, accessed December 18, 2018, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00141840802563956>. Some cultures love to touch, some don't. In Thailand the head is sacred and should never be touched; in the UK touching someone's head is perfectly acceptable. In many Asian cultures touching feet is a sign of respect; in America a foot massage is a delightful way of relaxing!

a baby develops in the womb, and then often the last one a person loses when they die. Psychologists have invested considerable energy in analyzing the effects of touch deprivation, concluding that touch deprivation can result in failure to thrive or even death. Humans need touch.<sup>86</sup>

Jesus has authority as the Son of God. He delegates this authority to his followers and Christians should steward this authority with caution but also with confidence.<sup>87</sup> Jesus frequently used touch in his ministry, responding in his humanity to the brokenness and faith he encountered; bringing healing through the power of the Holy Spirit under the authority of God the Father. As imitators of Christ, and as those that are seeking to lead the church, clergy do well to emulate the touch of Christ. Phillip Keller comments, “There is, as well, the actual reality of experiencing and knowing firsthand the feel of His touch—the sense of His spirit upon my spirit. There is for the true child of God that intimate, subtle, yet magnificent experience of sensing that Comforter by his side.”<sup>88</sup>

As those who minister to others, the distinctiveness of touch in the name of Jesus is that it carries with it not simply the message of humanness and identification but can carry the power of the Holy Spirit (whether or not this can be fully rationally explained) and plays a part in ushering the Kingdom of God into the present. Christians pray, “Thy Kingdom come,” encouraging active involvement in partnering with God as he touches a

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<sup>85</sup> Gary Chapman’s book has been hugely influential in our time and culture: one of the five languages he discusses is the language of touch. Gary D. Chapman, *The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love That Lasts* (Chicago: Northfield Publishing, 2015).

<sup>86</sup> Definition: “a lack of tactile stimulation, especially in early infancy. If continued for a sufficient length of time, it may lead to serious developmental and emotional disturbances, such as stunted growth, personality disorders, and social regression. In severe cases a child who is deprived of adequate physical handling and emotional stimulation may not survive infancy.” “Touch Deprivation,” The Free Dictionary, accessed December 18, 2018, <http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/touch+deprivation>.

<sup>87</sup> Matthew 28:18.

<sup>88</sup> W. Phillip Keller, *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 91.



broken world. Clergy, uniquely, have a position as standing “in the place of Christ” as they minister to their communities.

In pastoral care, clergy can emulate Christ’s ministry by looking for the marginalized: the poor, the social outcasts, the neglected, or those who simply feel invisible. They should be alert to the need for healing (in body, mind, and spirit), and the possibility of prayer: for responsible, respectful touch, anointing and laying on of hands, done appropriately within the church community.

There are many who would exploit inappropriate touch: and caution should be used about some of the many alternative health methodologies which are based on a spiritual view of touch that is alien to Christianity. Reiki, acupuncture, reflexology, magnatherapy, and therapeutic touch are just a few of the myriad options that are based on other faiths.<sup>89</sup> Some of these are controversial. Though some can be used with care, the seriousness of utilizing religious practices which may have foundations with which Christianity is fundamentally in opposition should not be underestimated. It is clear that as Christ touched people, miraculous, supernatural events took place. For clergy to open themselves to spiritual experiences not based in Christ is unwise to say the least.

### Clergy Touch in Sacramental Ministry

The church is the continuation of the corporeality of Christ, so the church must be Christomorphic: subsisting both in and as Christ (the body of Christ). Rahner has suggested that the church is there to make Christ present in the world in an historical, visible and embodied form.<sup>90</sup> The church is not Christ, it is incorporated in person but not

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<sup>89</sup> Salladay examines many of these at length, highlighting the dangers for Christians either seeking healing or seeking to be engaged in healing practices. Susan A. Salladay, “Should Christians Use Therapeutic Touch?” *Christian Bioethics* 8, no. 1 (2002): 40-41.

in nature; and she has the Spirit of Christ, so is pneumatomorphic. The marks of the church relate to the nature of touch most explicitly in the aspect of catholicity, as this describes how it comes into its fullness through the work of the Holy Spirit who breathes life into communities. God is not confined to the church: a trinitarian viewpoint indicates that God is very much at work throughout the world in all peoples and places. He does however have a specific and explicit role for the church as the body of Christ: the church is sent into the world in the same way that Jesus was sent, and it is a servant people which speaks of continuity with Israel. “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.”<sup>91</sup>

The early church was formed around people who had known and touched Jesus. The need for continuity was maintained, and Paul’s letters in many ways bound the early communities together as they sought to find their way in the new paradigm of faith. As Jesus had related to his disciples in meaningful and human connections, so the new churches sought to live out their lives in ways which reflected his healing, teaching, and touching ministry. Willard says, when discussing the power in believers through faith in Christ, “This power is...*literally* located in the body of the redeemed or spiritually enlightened person. In the New Testament it is present to an even higher degree when that person is together with others in the *ecclesia*.”<sup>92</sup> The power of God is displayed

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<sup>90</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology an Introduction* (Chichester, West Sussex, U.K.; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 386.

<sup>91</sup> 1 John 1:1-3.

<sup>92</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990), 122. Willard cites Matthew 18:18-20 and 1 Corinthians 5:4-5.

through outreach, service, and proclamation of the word: the church becomes real when it is gathered and then heads out to be hands-on in the world.

As Icenogle frames it, “The apostolic drive for firsthand encounter through personal, touchable and concrete evidence was absolutely necessary for the continuity and consistency of the real human fellowships who gathered in the name (nature and way) of Jesus.”<sup>93</sup>

Touch is used explicitly in all seven Catholic sacraments (except, it could be argued, for repentance/penance): including baptism, anointing with oil, consecration, ordination, confirmation, marriage (binding hands), and some ancient sacraments such as foot washing. St. Augustine of Hippo's definition of a sacrament is well-known: “The Word comes to the element; and so there is a sacrament, that is, a sort of visible word.”<sup>94</sup>

Every sacrament has two components: the physical object(s) – the sign (signum) – and the invisible reality (res) that is thereby signified and proclaimed. It is this phenomenological sign which relates best to a theology of touch. In addition, sacraments are indicative of, and also convey, inward and spiritual blessing.<sup>95</sup> In baptism, “the baptized shared Christ’s redemption, death and resurrection by a tangible confession of faith, being conformed to the crucified and risen Lord.”<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Gareth Weldon Icenogle, *Biblical Foundations for Small Group Ministry: An Integrative Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994).

<sup>94</sup> Howard W. Stone, “Pastoral Care,” in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity, Volume 4*, ed. Erwin Fahlbusch, Jan Milic Lochman, Geoffrey William Bromiley, John Mbiti, David B. Barrett, Jaroslav Pelikan, and Lukas Vischer (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2005), 68.

<sup>95</sup> I. Howard Marshall, J. I. Packer, D. J. Wiseman, and A. R. Millard, eds., *New Bible Dictionary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 1034.

<sup>96</sup> Sinclair B. Ferguson and J. I. Packer, *New Dictionary of Theology*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 71-72.

At the time of dying, Anglican clergy are likely simply to anoint a forehead as a sacramental gesture when praying for the dying or recently deceased. But the pastoral touch preceding death of holding someone's hand can bring deep comfort and connectedness.

At the heart of the life of the body of Christ is the Eucharist: the remembrance of the cross and the resurrection. As Christians celebrate the resurrection, week by week, there is a powerful moment of touch as the celebrant prays the epiclesis, breaks the bread, and pours the wine. As clergy distribute the bread, remembering the real presence of Christ, they may place it deliberately and carefully into a person's hands. As they present the cup, there is another moment of prayerful connection.

This and the other sacraments all emphasize touch as an aspect of their physically symbolic nature. Clergy have a unique privilege of standing in the place of Christ as they serve their parishioners in all these holy moments.

### Clergy Touch in Prayer Ministry

In the Bible, the right hand is often seen as symbolic of God's rule and salvation.<sup>97</sup> This emphasis on his hand underlies the importance God gives to touch. Hands convey the power of God as they are used wisely and under his guidance.

Humans are made in the image and likeness of God, as is Christ, and when they rise again, they will be complete, "Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven."<sup>98</sup> But as Jesus is the model for all humanity – what does his touch convey? His touch conveyed healing and power, comfort

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<sup>97</sup> Exodus 15:6; Psalm 17:7; Ephesians 1:20.

<sup>98</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:49. See also Genesis 5:1-3; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 1:15.

and wholeness, reassurance. As humans, we are conscious that our touch does that to people in a lesser way; ultimately touch too should reflect the wholeness that Christ's touch can bring. Laying on of hands can convey authority and power. In the Bible it is used in commissioning, in blessing, equipping for service, in healing, and for anointing with the Holy Spirit.<sup>99</sup> All of these are ways all clergy can exercise their responsibilities in prayer as they too use the laying on of hands.<sup>100</sup>

Although not common in all mainline churches, exorcism is practiced in the Anglican Church by clergy as it has been for centuries. Traditionally, the name of Jesus is used; however, touch, breath, and the sign of the cross are also frequently used. It could be said that baptismal vows automatically include a form of exorcism, where all forms of darkness are renounced and forgiven.<sup>101</sup>

As clergy reach out to others with prayer for healing there is an emphasis on where humanity is fallen and broken, and yet there is the promise of a new heaven and a new earth, the beginnings of which can be seen now. Healing provides a foretaste, a glimpse of an ultimate wholeness, a glimpse of what heaven will be like when people are indeed fully human in the world to come. "For now, we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully

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<sup>99</sup> Blessing: Mark 10:16. Equipping: Genesis 48:1–20; Numbers 27:18–23; Deuteronomy 34:9; Acts 13:3; 1 Timothy 4:14. Healing: e.g. Matthew 8:3; 9:20; Luke 4:40; Acts 28:8. Anointing: Deuteronomy 34:9; Acts 8:17; 2 Timothy 1:6.

<sup>100</sup> Francis. MacNutt, *Healing (Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 2006)*. is a remarkable and comprehensive guide to healing in the church.

<sup>101</sup> Sinclair B. Ferguson and J.I. Packer, *New Dictionary of Theology*, 245. The renunciations are as follows: "Then the Celebrant asks the following questions of the candidates who can speak for themselves, and of the parents and godparents who speak on behalf of the infants and younger children: Do you renounce Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God? Do you renounce the evil powers of this world which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God? Do you renounce all sinful desires that draw you from the love of God?" Episcopal Church, *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church: Together with the Psalter or Psalms of David According to the Use of the Episcopal Church* (New York: Church Hymnal Corp, 1979), 302.

known.”<sup>102</sup> Now the world operates as a shadow, humanity is imperfect though modelled on the perfect.

The Bible speaks extensively about bodies, and hands are no exception. Whether through violent or peaceful acts, creative or destructive ones, there is a deep awareness that people use their hands for good or ill.<sup>103</sup> The way bodies are used is important: “I appeal to you...to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”<sup>104</sup> “But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, ... he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.”<sup>105</sup> Paul speaks often of the need to take care that behavior is pure.<sup>106</sup> Because bodies are the Lord’s, they are a temple of the Holy Spirit, and he ends v. 20 with a rousing “so glorify God in your body.”<sup>107</sup>

The consideration of an individual’s use of their bodies leads to a consideration of how people engage with others in a social context. In light of that, it is worth lingering for a moment to consider the role of relationship within the Trinity. There are many ways of looking at the doctrine of the Trinity, but intrinsically all begin with the relational aspect that binds the three persons into one God.

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<sup>102</sup> 1 Corinthians 13:12.

<sup>103</sup> Leland Ryken, Jim Wilhoit, Tremper Longman et al., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 360-61.

<sup>104</sup> Romans 12:1.

<sup>105</sup> Romans 8:10-11. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 72.

<sup>106</sup> Romans 13:13-14; 1 Timothy 5:22; Titus 2:5.

<sup>107</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, 776.

The immanent Trinity describes the three persons of the Godhead in unison: each in their own way unique, yet each totally interwoven with the roles and personalities of the others. God is one yet three persons, diverse and relational. Grenz suggests, “The doctrine of the Trinity states further that the essence of God is love. Consequently, love stands as the ideal and the standard for human life as well.”<sup>108</sup> Whenever God is described as person – or three persons – something is indicated about relationship, community, and touch; “Revelation ... is the self-disclosure of God-in-relation.”<sup>109</sup> McGrath explains perichoresis as that which “allows the individuality of the persons to be maintained, while insisting that each person shares in the life of the other two. An image often used to express this idea is that of a ‘community of being,’ in which each person, while maintaining its distinctive identity, penetrates the others and is penetrated by them.” A number of other theologians have described the relationship of the Trinity to be like a dance. St. John of Damascus (8<sup>th</sup> century) suggested when describing the Trinity in his *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* that, “they [the three persons] are made one not so as to commingle, but so as to cleave to each other and they have their being in each other without any coalescence or commingling.”<sup>110</sup> The persons of the Trinity are separate and yet one. Richard of St. Victor developed Augustine’s ideas of the three persons’ loving relationship, calling them the lover, the beloved, and the co-beloved.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Stanley Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 76.

<sup>109</sup> Stanley Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 81.

<sup>110</sup> St John of Damascus, *An Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, Book I*, New Advent, accessed December 18, 2018 at <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/33041.htm>.

<sup>111</sup> Fellowship of the Burning Heart, “The Spirit – Co-Beloved, not the Love,” *You are the Christ, the son of the living God!* (blog), July 6, 2011, accessed December 18, 2018, <http://youarethechrist.blogspot.com/2011/07/spirit-co-beloved-not-love.html>.

Or as Gregory of Nazianzus said, “The monad, moving forth into the dyad, came to rest in the triad.”<sup>112</sup>

Another way of looking at the Trinity is as the economic Trinity: how God is at work in the world. This naturally leads on the specifics of the individual persons of the Godhead and their work in the world. However, it can be said that when any one person of the Trinity is at work, so too are the other two. For example, when Jesus healed anyone with a touch, the Holy Spirit was mediating that healing, and the wholeness came from the restorative heart of the Father. The relational aspects of the Trinity emphasize the value God places on interpersonal interactions, which fundamentally include touch.

God is relational and he has made people in his image, so then they form a relational community of people.<sup>113</sup> There are many scriptures which compare the church to the body of Christ.<sup>114</sup> And the church is comprised of people being transformed individually and corporately into the bride of Christ.<sup>115</sup>

A Christian community needs to reflect the social aspects of the love that flows between the three persons of the Trinity. This should invade each person’s compassion and concern for their brothers and sisters in the community of Christ, but should also spill over into their relationship with the world. This display of love should be modeled on the social Trinity, or relational God.<sup>116</sup> This impacts a view of soteriology and mission others are invited into the Kingdom, and into the community of God.

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<sup>112</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration 29.3*, quoted in John C. Polkinghorne, *The Trinity and an Entangled World: Relationality in Physical Science and Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2010), 122.

<sup>113</sup> Stanley Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 179.

<sup>114</sup> 2 Corinthians 4.4; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3.

<sup>115</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:49; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 3:10.



## Conclusion

Ultimately, Jesus used touch in his ministry as a vehicle of his compassion and he always healed individuals by his faith in the Father (though responding to their faith) through the power of the Holy Spirit; the Trinity at work in ministering to a hurting world.

All people need touch, and the scientific reasons for this will be explored in Chapter 3. What has been explored in this chapter is that Jesus used touch deliberately and carefully to convey comfort, healing, life, and blessing. He never used touch in a sexual or otherwise inappropriate manner. He touched with purpose and intention. He touched with the authority of the Son of God who was also the Son of Man.

As clergy reach out to touch people, they must be mindful that they are Christ's representatives to a hurting world. They too should touch for healing, comfort and blessing - conveying the love and healing of the Father - but they must be cautious that they never overestimate their personal role in the transaction. They are always simply intermediaries who by faith can carry those they encounter to the feet of him who will touch and thereby restore and heal. Careful attention needs to be paid to any intentional or unintentional personal motivation for touch. Whether lay or clergy, touch can and should be used with care in ministry to others.

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<sup>116</sup> Stanley Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 76.

## CHAPTER THREE THE SCIENCE OF TOUCH

Touch has a memory.

—John Keats

The weaker you are, the more powerless you feel, the more you will be able to understand this. You have nothing more to lose. Live your life inside of Christ who lives inside of you. He will embody you and enable you. This is Jesus' way, the way of the cross.

—Br. Curtis Almquist, SSJE

### Introduction

Open any newspaper, switch on the TV, or check your Facebook page and you will see pictures of people making physical contact with one another: people fighting, rescuing, playing, embracing – wherever there is a story of lives lived in proximity, there is a story of touch. This chapter will explore scientific findings about the effect of touch on bodies, minds, and spirits through looking at the physiological, psychological, and social aspects of touch.

The history of studying the science of touch could perhaps be traced to Aristotle. His seminal work, *De Anima*, explores the purpose and benefits of tactility, suggesting that touch is critical to our ability to self-reference and indeed is deeply tied to the intellect.<sup>1</sup> Scientific thought on touch has disentangled a direct correlation between touch and intelligence, but Aristotle's outlook set the tone for two thousand years of scientific thought. As Mascia-Lees suggests, "Aristotle portrayed sight as the most informative of the senses, he described touch as the primary sense and the basis of human intelligence."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pascal Massie, "Touching, Thinking, Being: the Sense of Touch in Aristotle's 'de Anima' and Its Implications," *Existentia Existentia* 23, no. 1–2 (2013): 155–174.

<sup>2</sup> Frances E. Mascia-Lees, ed., *A Companion to the Anthropology of the Body and Embodiment* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 435, accessed December 19, 2018, <http://doi.wiley.com/10.1002/9781444340488>

It was, indeed, Aristotle who solidified the concept of the five senses, though he himself categorized taste as being a sub-category of touch.<sup>3</sup> This chapter will explore the role of touch in our development as humans; noting the science of the role of touch in healthy physical development in our bodies, minds, and spirits. It should be noted that the field is vast and that this is at best a summary of significant areas of research.<sup>4</sup> The purpose is to demonstrate that touch is vitally important to mental, physical, emotional, and indeed spiritual well-being, and that clergy ignore it to their loss.

### **Touch and our Bodies**

People are biologically wired for connection. Extensive studies have shown how from the moment of birth to the moment of death, physical well-being is significantly influenced by healthy touch. Clearly, one cannot deliberately set up experiments on humans to study the effect of lack of touch, but the cruelty that transpires in world history has provided some deeply important lessons which have offered fertile ground for developing studies into the negative and positive outcomes of touch deprivation.

### **Touch Deprivation**

In 1965 Nicolae Ceaușescu was elected as the general secretary of the Romanian Communist Party, a position he held until 1989. One aspect of his economic policy rested on the growth of the available workforce, and so Ceaușescu brought into law a number of

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<sup>3</sup> Frances E. Mascia-Lees, *A Companion*, 435.

<sup>4</sup> Tiffany Field, Graeme Galton, Ashley Montagu, and Bessel van der Kolk are all referenced extensively in this paper, and they have all written extensively in this field. In addition, the fields of Developmental Biology, Neuropsychology, and Developmental Psychology all explore the role of touch in healthy human development.

measures to increase the childbirth rate of the country, without simultaneously making adequate provision for the strain that would put on families, the health system, and even the education system. This policy resulted in a rapid expansion of childcare facilities called leagăne, or cradles.<sup>5</sup> These institutions often had child to caregiver ratios of 20:1 and the result was a significant lack of regular touch for these babies and young children. The results of this neglect have now been widely studied. One of the most insightful studies was completed by Mary Carlson and Felton Earls.<sup>6</sup> They described the children found, after Ceaușescu's assassination, in many of these homes: "The muteness, blank facial expressions, social withdrawal, and bizarre stereotypical movements of these infants bore a strong resemblance to the behavior of socially deprived macaques and chimpanzees."<sup>7</sup> Their studies have shown the long-term negative effects of the neglect, and lack of touch, which these children experienced. Carlson's findings concluded that tactile stimulation was related to the production of cortisol (stress hormone) in early development. She observed that this was severely lacking in the children who had not received adequate touch in their early years.<sup>8</sup> The role of cortisol has become an important field of study for modern science.

In terms of the orphans' attachment capacity, Chisholm's study compared the development of healthy attachment for adopted children who had lived in these orphanages for at least 8 months with those in two control groups.<sup>9</sup> Her findings

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<sup>5</sup> Maria Konnikova, "The Power of Touch," Nikos Marinos Consultancy, June 6, 2015, accessed December 19, 2018, <https://www.nikosmarinos.com/the-power-of-touch.html>.

<sup>6</sup> M. Carlson and F. Earls, "Psychological and Neuroendocrinological Sequelae of Early Social Deprivation in Institutionalized Children in Romania," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 807 (January 15, 1997): 419–428.

<sup>7</sup> M. Carlson and F. Earls, "Psychological and Neuroendocrinological Sequelae," 422.

<sup>8</sup> M. Carlson and F. Earls, "Psychological and Neuroendocrinological Sequelae," 423.

highlighted the long-term problems that these children faced, as well as the remarkable improvements which came after adoption, and the loving and consistent application and attention of their adoptive families. Indeed, 30 minutes of daily touch by volunteers was gradually able to reverse the negative effects of touch deprivation if the child was younger than two years old, showing the remarkable resiliency of humanity.<sup>10</sup> Without intervention by this age the problems persisted as the child developed. Having developed a thorough explanation of how bodies hold memories, and weighed the alternatives of medication to calm distress, Van der Kolk suggests that “the most natural way that we humans calm down our distress is by being touched, hugged and rocked.”<sup>11</sup> This has been the repeated outcome of research around touch deprivation: it can often be reversed – by positive, affirmative touch.

### Attachment Theory

Modern psychology has John Bowlby to thank for his extensive, foundational work on attachment theory. However, the father of behaviorism is often thought of as John Watson. His theories have come to be largely rejected, and were even at the time highly contested, but he was operating in, and responding to, the culture and time he lived in. His advice on parenting seems so foreign to our current expectations as he encouraged parents to “be objective and kindly firm.”<sup>12</sup> His guidelines for the ways parents should

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<sup>9</sup> Kim Chisholm, “A Three Year Follow-up of Attachment and Indiscriminate Friendliness in Children Adopted from Romanian Orphanages,” *Child Development* 69, no. 4 (September 2008): 1092–1106, accessed August 24, 2018, <http://doi.wiley.com/10.1111/j.1467-8624.1998.tb06162.x>.

<sup>10</sup> Kim Chisholm, “A Three Year Follow-up,” 1102.

<sup>11</sup> Bessel A. Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (New York: Viking, 2014), 215.

<sup>12</sup> John B. Watson, *Psychological Care of Infant and Child: With the Assistance of Rosalie Rayner Watson* (New York: Arno Pr., 1972), 81-82. See also, K Bigelow and E Morris, “John B. Watson’s Advice

touch their children continued, “Never hug and kiss them, never let them sit in your lap. If you must, kiss them once on the forehead when they say good night. Shake hands with them in the morning. Give them a pat on the head if they have made an extraordinarily good job of a difficult task.”<sup>13</sup> These responses seem foreign to 21<sup>st</sup>-century ears. However, it was significant that he was considering the role touch played in child-rearing at that time.

Harry Harlow began his research in the 1930s. His work was controversial as he studied the outcomes of maternal-infant separation on rhesus monkeys.<sup>14</sup> This separation caused significant distress in the baby monkeys. What began as an unexpected spin-off of raising monkeys in nurseries developed into a full-blown career as he responded to his observations on the development, both psychologically and physiologically, of the baby monkeys when they were raised without their mothers. His findings concluded that the bond between mother and baby went far beyond that of simply being a provider of nourishment.<sup>15</sup> To be sure, the contact which a mother (or father) offered provided stability, confidence, reduced fear, improved digestion, and overall a more stable mature offspring resulted; indeed, the parent provided love.<sup>16</sup>

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on Child Rearing: Some Historical Context,” *Behavioural Development Bulletin* 10, no. 1 (2001): 26–30, accessed Nov 21, 2018, <http://psycnet.apa.org/fulltext/2014-55587-006.html>.

<sup>13</sup> John B. Watson, *Psychological Care of Infant and Child*.

<sup>14</sup> Indeed, his research would be impossible to reproduce today as their use of animals in the experiments would be considered cruel and indeed unethical. The movement of animal liberation was started by an outcry against Harlow’s experiments.

<sup>15</sup> The role of mother as provider of food had been seen as the primary motivation for maternal-child bonding by behaviorists. See John B. Watson, *Psychological Care of Infant and Child*, 81-82.

<sup>16</sup> Harry F. Harlow, “The Nature of Love,” *American Psychologist* 13, no. 12 (1958): 673–685, accessed December 19, 2018, <http://content.apa.org/journals/amp/13/12/673>. See also Harry F. Harlow and R. R. Zimmerman, “Affectional Responses in the Infant Monkey,” *Science* 130 (August 1959): 421–432, accessed December 19, 2018, <http://web.comhem.se/u52239948/08/harlow59.pdf>.

John Bowlby built on this foundation as he and his team began to study the psychological health of children in relation to their attachment to their primary caregiver. Although his work did not limit itself to, or focus on, touch, subsequent research has developed this specific aspect of attachment theory.<sup>17</sup> The results have consistently shown that touch is integral to the physical and mental developmental well-being of children. Rubin, for example, explored the role of touch in maternal-infant bonding and found that this appeared to be two-way: mothers learn about their infants through touch, just as simultaneously the infants begin to learn about the world from their mothers.<sup>18</sup> Duhn's exploration of touch in attachment theory concludes, "The medium of touch acts as a communication of support and protection that is integral to the infant in achieving secure attachment. It is in the arms of their caregiver that the infant begins developing the vital capacity for human connection and meaning."<sup>19</sup> This search for meaning is processed in our minds.

### Touch and our Minds

Touch is clearly a physical act; however, the impact of touch on mental health is significant. Tiffany Field's work at the Touch Research Institute (TRI) built significantly on Bowlby's work and she has shown that where touching from caregivers is minimal, there is a strong correlation to later cognitive and neurodevelopmental delays.<sup>20</sup> Using

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<sup>17</sup> For example, see Lenora Duhn, "The Importance of Touch in the Development of Attachment," *Advances in Neonatal Care* 10, no. 6 (December 2010): 294-300.

<sup>18</sup> Reva Rubin, "Maternal Touch," *Nursing Outlook* 11 (November 1963): 828-831.

<sup>19</sup> Lenora Duhn, "The Importance of Touch," 300.

<sup>20</sup> Tiffany Field, *Touch* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 71. This extraordinary organization continues to do remarkable work on the science and psychology of touch. It is the first research center in the world to focus on touch and its application in medicine and science. Their website also contains a great

their scientific conclusions, the TRI has developed a Wellness Centre where they offer massage for all ages from infants through to the elderly. Their findings on the benefits of massage began with a project with pregnant mothers, then developed into massage for infants and then through adulthood.<sup>21</sup> The Institute has developed a field of “touch therapy.” The benefits of this therapy include (but are not limited to): facilitating weight gain in preterm infants, enhancing attentiveness, alleviating depressive symptoms, reduction of pain, reduction of stress hormones, and improvements in the development of immune function in children and adults.<sup>22</sup>

The effect of touch on our brains has been noted since the days of Aristotle.<sup>23</sup> Philosophers and psychologists have long pondered on the benefits of touch to our minds. Recently, Matt Hertenstein, an experimental psychologist at DePauw University in Indiana, has done significant work on the effect of touch on the chemicals in the brain. A recent article described his findings:

Touch releases a range of neurochemicals, including endorphins (which are similar in effect to opiates, such as morphine) and neurohormones, such as oxytocin. One effect of oxytocin is an increase in general feelings of wellbeing and, interestingly, it is released both when we receive a loving or comforting touch and when we give one.<sup>24</sup>

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list of the most up-to-date articles appearing on touch: Touch Research Institute, “TRI News,” accessed December 19, 2018, <https://www6.miami.edu/touch-research/News.html>.

<sup>21</sup> See chapters 7 and 8 of Tiffany Field, *Touch*.

<sup>22</sup> More details on each of these can be found on the TRI website.

<sup>23</sup> A good translation of Aristotle’s work on the nature of the soul can be found here: Aristotle, “On the Soul,” trans. J. A. Smith, The Internet Classics Archive, accessed December 20, 2018, <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/soul.html>. Book 2, page 51 includes Aristotle’s theory on touch as the primary sense. Pascal Massie, “Touching, Thinking, Being” unpacks this idea further explaining Aristotle’s rationale.

<sup>24</sup> “The hands-on power of touch”, accessed Nov 21, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2016/jul/31/the-hands-on-power-of-touch-psychology-well-being>.



Hertenstein has also done some fascinating work on the use of touch to decode emotions using blindfolded strangers.<sup>25</sup> It is findings like these that are fueling the rapid growth of scientific research in the benefits of positive touch. Scientists and doctors alike are realizing that touch may be a useful tool in their treatment for anxiety, dementia, and for those with profound needs such as learning disabilities.<sup>26</sup>

Tiffany Field has worked extensively to establish what happens in our brains when we are touched. The increase in oxytocin and decrease in cortisol are both significant in the sense of well-being of the recipient.<sup>27</sup> These chemicals are also deeply connected to a person's mental response to the touch involved in close physical contact – such as in the moment of making love. Oxytocin is sometimes called the cuddle chemical, or cuddle hormone, as it is the hormone which is released when people bond closely.<sup>28</sup> Close physical touch, such as occurs during sex, or massage also releases other chemicals: dopamine and serotonin both of which are known as hormones which improve

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<sup>25</sup> “The Power of Touch”, accessed Nov 21, 2018, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/articles/201303/the-power-touch>

<sup>26</sup> “Given the high prevalence of anxiety disorders and the current paucity of evidence on therapeutic touch in this population, there is a need for well conducted randomized controlled trials to examine the effectiveness of therapeutic touch for anxiety disorders,” from Jacqueline Robinson, “Therapeutic touch for anxiety disorders,” Cochrane Library, July 18, 2007, accessed December 19, 2018, <https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD006240.pub2/full#>; N. Viggo Hansen, T. Jørgensen, and L. Ørtenblad, “Massage and touch for dementia,” Cochrane Library, October 18, 2006, accessed December 19, 2018, <https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD004989.pub2/full>; Susan Dobson, Shripati Upadhyaya, Ian Conyers, Raghu Raghavan, “Touch in the Care of People with Profound and Complex Needs: A Review of the Literature,” *Journal of Intellectual Disabilities* 6, no. 4 (December 2002): 351–362, accessed December 19, 2018, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/146900470200600402>.

<sup>27</sup> Tiffany Field, “Touch for Socioemotional and Physical Well-Being: A Review,” *Developmental Review* 30, no. 4 (December 2010): 367–383, accessed December 23, 2018. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0273229711000025>.

<sup>28</sup> Mark Turrell, “Sex and the Brain: How Neuroscience May Soon Change All Our Relationships,” Mark Turrell—Changing the World (blog), March 18, 2012, accessed December 19, 2018, <https://markturrell.wordpress.com/2012/03/18/sex-and-the-brain-how-neuroscience-may-soon-change-all-our-relationships-6/>; Stephanie Pappas, “Oxytocin: Facts about the ‘Cuddle Hormone,’” *Live Science*, June 4, 2015, accessed December 19, 2018, <https://www.livescience.com/42198-what-is-oxytocin.html>.

our sense of well-being.<sup>29</sup> At the other extreme, cortisol, or the ‘stress-hormone’, plays its part in the ‘fight-or-flight’ mechanisms in our bodies which will be a part of the response to negative or abusive touch.<sup>30</sup> Van der Kolk’s experiments in the 1950s paved the way for today’s neuroscientists to continue to investigate the effect of touch on our body chemistry. In addition, however, there is the use of touch for our emotional and psychological health.

### **Role of Touch in Psychoanalysis**

Given their many similarities, it behooves us to look to psychoanalytic counseling methodology as we consider pastoral counseling. Freud is without a doubt the father of psychodynamic counseling. Initially he worked with the physical symptoms as he explored healing for his patients who were struggling with various forms of neurosis, or ‘hysteria’. He experimented with hypnosis and then began using a technique which involved applying pressure to a patient’s forehead; this was meant to encourage them to form ‘associations’ in their mind between their symptoms and memories.<sup>31</sup> He described it thus,

We instruct the patient to put himself into a state of quiet, unreflecting self-observation, and to report to us whatever internal observations he is able to make – taking care not to exclude any of them, whether on the ground that it is too

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<sup>29</sup> Sex has been defined as “the harmony of two souls and the contact of two epidermis,” see Alex Comfort and Susan Quilliam, *The Joy of Sex*, ultimate revised edition (New York: Harmony, 2009), 11. Sex is indeed the closest two bodies can get to each other. See also Tiffany Field, Maria Hernandez-Reif, Miguel Diego, Saul Schanberg, and Cynthia Kuhn, “Cortisol Decreases and Serotonin and Dopamine Increase Following Massage Therapy,” *International Journal of Neuroscience* 115, no. 10 (January 2005): 1397–1413, accessed December 20, 2018, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00207450590956459>.

<sup>30</sup> Bessel A. Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (New York: Viking, 2014), 30-31 describes the role of cortisol in our fight or flight mode; see also “What is Cortisol?”, WebMD, accessed December 20, 2018, <https://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/what-is-cortisol#1>.

<sup>31</sup> John Wiltshire, “The Stories of Sigmund Freud,” *Quadrant* 25, no. 4 (April 1981): 23-25.

disagreeable or too indiscreet to say, or that it is too unimportant or irrelevant, or that it is nonsensical and need not be said.<sup>32</sup>

This was meant to help them remember the source of their trauma. Eventually, he moved simply to asking patients to make ‘free associations’ without touch. In order to reduce the risk of influencing those ‘free associations’. Freud eventually had his patients lie on a couch so that there was minimal interaction between patient and therapist – no touch and even no visual connection.<sup>33</sup> And so began the taboo on touch for psychotherapists.

However, as psychotherapy has developed, there have gradually been a few therapists who have explored the use of touch in the healing process. This field is often known as Bioenergetics. This is an approach to psychodynamic psychotherapy originating with Freud, that has further developed in recent years. It is based on the theory that emotional healing can be found through a resolution of physical tension. The use of physical touching is a key tool. An early proponent of this method was the English pediatrician and psychoanalyst, Dr. Donald Woods Winnicott (1896–1971). Winnicott was unusual in that he deliberately used touch on some occasions:

In fact, it was necessary for me over a long period of time to hold this patient’s hands throughout the analysis, this being the equivalent of certifying her and putting her in a padded cell for the analytic hour. In this way she was able to proceed and to express love and hate. If I failed in this physical way, then in actual practice I got hit and hurt and this did no good either to me or to the patient.<sup>34</sup>

There was considerable debate about Winnicott’s work, and most of his contemporaries rejected his suggestion that touch could be helpful in therapy. However, as time has

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<sup>32</sup> Sigmund. Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis (1915-1917)* (London: Hogarth Press: 1995), 328.

<sup>33</sup> Nicola Diamond, “Between touches,” in Graeme Galton, *Touch Papers: Dialogues on Touch in the Psychoanalytic Space* (London: Karnac Books, 2011), 80.

<sup>34</sup> F. Robert Rodman and Donald W Winnicott, *The Spontaneous Gesture: Selected Letters of D. W. Winnicott* (London: Routledge, 2018), 56–57.

passed by, although touch is still largely taboo in psychotherapy, increasingly some therapists are exploring its helpfulness.<sup>35</sup> Valerie Sinason's chapter in *Touch Papers* describes her use of touch in a number of case studies of her work with deeply traumatized subjects. In every case, touch was used in a limited, and very carefully thought-through, fashion: indeed, often only in one session out of many with a client. However, in every case she cites it provided a moment of breakthrough for her clients.<sup>36</sup>

Bio-energetics has proved to be a technique which is deeply therapeutic for some, and contentious for others. Sinason argues that any use of touch should come from the initial diagnosis of a patient's needs, and that touch should be deliberate and justifiable without being used simply as a response to a patient's request.<sup>37</sup> Bosanquet develops the argument that some patients' trauma is directly linked to a failure or abuse on the part of a parental figure, and that there are times when a therapist needs to step into the role of the mother or father. These parental roles might require different stances on the part of a therapist. For example, it may be helpful for a maternal figure to offer reassurance through touch.<sup>38</sup> This agrees with Winnicott's assertion that if regression theory is used, a patient might benefit from having their hand held by a maternal figure as they regress to childhood.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Brett Kahr, "Winnicott's experiments with physical contact: creative innovation or chaotic impingement?", in Graeme Galton, *Touch Papers*, 3.

<sup>36</sup> Valerie Sinason, "No touch please—we're British psychodynamic practitioners," in Graeme Galton, *Touch Papers*.

<sup>37</sup> Valerie Sinason, "No touch please," 48.

<sup>38</sup> Camilla Bosanquet, "Symbolic understanding of tactile communication in psychotherapy," in Graeme Galton, *Touch Papers*, 31.

<sup>39</sup> Brett Kahr, "Winnicott's experiments with physical contact," 32.

Touch affects our bodies and minds, but there is a deeper place within us that touch can reach. Touch has an influence on our spirits, at the heart of who we are as humans.

### Touch and our Spirits

As we consider the role of touch in our spirits, we will consider the ways our touch connects us to other people socially, as well as in our appreciation and joy of art and beauty.

### Touch as Social Glue

Having seen how significant touch is for the healthy development of children both physically and mentally, it is noteworthy that touch also plays a powerful role in our social engagement with each other. Often governed by cultural mores, there is much to observe in the interactions of individuals in differing levels of relational proximity.

Touch was earlier shown to be vital in the attachment of children to parents. But in addition, there is significant research on the bonding that touch facilitates within long-term relationships. For example, Guerro and Anderson found that “while couples who are satisfied with each other do tend to touch more, the true indicator of a healthy long-term bond is not how often your partner touches you but how often he or she touches you in *response* to your touch. The stronger the reciprocity, the more likely someone is to report emotional intimacy and satisfaction with the relationship.”<sup>40</sup> Their research studied those who are touch avoidant as well, monitoring their public aversion to touch, leading to a

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<sup>40</sup> Laura K. Guerrero and Peter A. Andersen, “The Waxing and Waning of Relational Intimacy: Touch as a Function of Relational Stage, Gender and Touch Avoidance,” *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 8, no. 2 (1991): 147-165. A helpful map was included in an Oxford University news article, University of Oxford, “Maps show where touching is allowed,” October 27, 2015, accessed December 20, 2018, <http://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2015-10-27-maps-show-where-touching-allowed-0>.

discussion on the boundaries people have for personal space depending on their level of touch aversion. The forerunner in this study of ‘proxemics’ is Edward Hall who looked extensively at the way we use space in our social interactions.<sup>41</sup>

However, if you stand at an airport arrivals or departure hall anywhere in the world, you will see various cultural variants of greeting and parting rituals: whether an ebullient bearhug through to a more discrete handshake, touch is often used in our greetings and farewells. A fascinating study of where and how different cultures allow touch was completed in a recent study at Oxford University.<sup>42</sup> As an evolutionary psychologist and anthropologist, Robin Dunbar’s studies on mammalian touch have been extensive, including looking at the way touch is used in social grooming and bonding. In addition, they found that there was a correlation between touch permissions and pleasure. “Acceptability of social touch was most limited (i.e., most relationship-specific) in regions with the strongest hedonic sensitivity, implying that it is the skin area’s capacity to trigger pleasure when touched that likely determines its relationship-specificity for social touch.”<sup>43</sup> Professor Robin Dunbar, commenting on the findings, added,

It is the relationship rather than familiarity that matters. A friend we haven’t seen for some time will still be able to touch areas where an acquaintance we see every day would not. We also interpret touch depending on the context of the relationship – we may perceive a touch in a particular place from a relative or friend as a comforting gesture, while the same touch from a partner might be more pleasurable, and from a stranger it would be entirely unwelcome.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension* (New York: Anchor Books, 1990).

<sup>42</sup> Juulia T. Suvilehto, Enrico Glerean, Robin I. M. Dunbar, Riitta Hari, and Lauri Nummenmaa, “Topography of Social Touching Depends on Emotional Bonds between Humans,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 112, no. 45 (November 10, 2015): 13811–13816, accessed December 23, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1519231112>.

<sup>43</sup> Juulia T. Suvilehto, et al., “Topography of Social Touching,” 13814.

<sup>44</sup> University of Oxford, “Maps show where touching is allowed.”

Professor Dunbar's team went on to look at cross-cultural differences, finding that although there are some minimal differences by culture, the universality of touch could be seen in the strongly similar approaches to where was seen as a "safe" place to touch. The project concludes "that the emotional bonds between individuals are closely associated with the bodily patterns where social touch is allowed. Such relationship-specific spatial patterns may reflect an important mechanism supporting establishing and maintenance of human social bonds."<sup>45</sup> Regardless of nationality and culture, zones for safe touch were almost identical and the need for touch for social bonding was universal. However, there were significant cultural differences and, universally, the most acceptable (or least unacceptable) place to touch another person is hand-to-hand. However, in some cultural and religious communities even this is not acceptable across gender lines. The gradations of acceptable touch as relationships become closer is also not universal. A further reminder, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, of the need always to ask before touching in any way other than in a standard socially and culturally acceptable manner depending on the context. For example, shaking hands in the West is generally acceptable without request.

### **Touch in Beauty and Communication**

It is worth mentioning, albeit in passing, that touch is also used extensively in art. The connection between artist and audience in sculpture designed for interaction, in dance, in the joy of pottery and finger-painting— all deeply delightful ways of engaging our bodies in touch.

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<sup>45</sup> Juulia T. Suvilehto, et al., "Topography of Social Touching," 13815.

There is also the deeply necessary role of Braille for communication for the blind and partially-sighted. Touch is essential for supplementing engagement in the world for those who have suffered a loss or decline in their other senses, whether sight, hearing or even taste.

### Touch in Professional Settings

In all the caring professions touch is integral and necessary to the healing process. We have already looked at the role of touch in psychotherapy, but doctors, nurses, pediatricians, and dentists all need to touch their patients in order to diagnose and treat. And what about other professions? Teachers, lawyers, clergy? Who should touch their clients and how? What are the risks, and what are the benefits?

It is not possible, in this thesis-project, to detail guidance for all professions, but it is worth looking at the basic expectations for some of these professionals as we consider the use of safe touch for clergy. Also impossible to detail is the considerable variation when you are dealing with children, or adults with learning or physical impairment including the elderly, where the complexities increase.<sup>46</sup> The use of “functional” touch – for example, holding the arm of an elderly lady as she rises from a chair – is also not detailed. However, courtesy, even then, would expect, “May I help you?” as a question from the one who would assist.

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<sup>46</sup> See E. Gale and J. R. Hegarty, “The Use of Touch in Caring for People with Learning Disability,” *British Journal of Developmental Disabilities* 46, no. 91 (2000): 97–108 for an introduction to this area.



## Guarding against the Misuse of Touch

It is worth paying brief attention to some of the common reasons why abusers exploit touch. There has been significant research which has shown that many perpetrators of violent and sexual crime do not have the capacity to grasp the emotional effect of their actions upon their victims.<sup>47</sup> This lack of empathy often has roots in personal stories of abuse as a child, exposure to pornography, particularly at an early age, and childhood victimization.<sup>48</sup> Abusive patterns can be learned especially where alternatives are not modelled. People can be objectified rather than honored, treated as ‘less than’, rather than as image-bearers of God. People who abuse others can be found in all walks of life, all demographics, all cultural and religious groups.

Some professional groups have very clear guidelines to help to highlight and so minimize the risks of touch. Lawyers may not be the professionals most at risk of misusing touch, but inevitably they do have clear guidelines! Doctors (and other care-givers), teachers, and clergy all have significant access to children, and vulnerable adults, including those in times of trauma, pain, and physical, emotional, or psychological turmoil. These four groups will be considered in turn.

### Lawyers

Lawyers are not the people you would immediately think of as touching their clients. And, indeed, the general protocol for lawyers would be to restrict themselves to

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<sup>47</sup> Elijah Paul Morrow, *Cognitive, Affective, and General Empathy in Sexual Offenders: A Meta-Analysis* (thesis, The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, forthcoming 2019).

<sup>48</sup> Teresa Goddard and Julie Ann Pooley, “The Impact of Childhood Abuse on Adult Male Prisoners: A Systematic Review,” *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology* (March 6, 2018), accessed December 20, 2018, <http://link.springer.com/10.1007/s11896-018-9260-6>.

touch only in normal greetings and farewells. However, when dealing with children and vulnerable adults, lawyers do, at times, need to use touch. Andrea Dennis produced a very helpful set of guidelines for Georgia Law, detailing the ways in which lawyers could and should use touch carefully with children.<sup>49</sup> She outlines appropriate touch for different age-groups of children and for those with different experiences and needs. The guidelines are thorough and useful when considering clergy touch as well as for other professions.

### **Doctors/Pediatricians**

Abraham Verghese is a doctor and an author. He has written beautifully about the deep ritual which touch conveys in a doctor/patient relationship. He summed this up in a TED talk by telling this story which he had previously written about:

I recall one patient who was at that point no more than a skeleton encased in shrinking skin, unable to speak, his mouth crusted with candida that was resistant to the usual medications. When he saw me on what turned out to be his last hours on this earth, his hands moved as if in slow motion. And as I wondered what he was up to, his stick fingers made their way up to his pajama shirt, fumbling with his buttons. I realized that he was wanting to expose his wicker-basket chest to me. It was an offering, an invitation. I did not decline.

I percussed. I palpated. I listened to the chest. I think he surely must have known by then that it was vital for me just as it was necessary for him. Neither of us could skip this ritual, which had nothing to do with detecting rales in the lung, or finding the gallop rhythm of heart failure. No, this ritual was about the one message that physicians have needed to convey to their patients. Although, God knows, of late, in our hubris, we seem to have drifted away. We seem to have forgotten -- as though, with the explosion of knowledge, the whole human genome mapped out at our feet, we are lulled into inattention, forgetting that the ritual is cathartic to the physician, necessary for the patient -- forgetting that the ritual has meaning and a singular message to convey to the patient.

And the message, which I didn't fully understand then, even as I delivered

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<sup>49</sup> Andrea Dennis, "Talk Don't Touch? Considerations for Children's Attorneys on the Physical Touch of Clients," *Catholic University Law Review* 65, no. 2 (2015): 253–302, accessed December 20, 2018, [http://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/fac\\_artchop/1084\\_](http://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/fac_artchop/1084_)

it, and which I understand better now is this: I will always, always, always be there. I will see you through this. I will never abandon you. I will be with you through the end.<sup>50</sup>

This is a thoughtful picture of the deep meaning that can be associated with appropriate touch. However, the risks of doctors transgressing appropriate touch are manifold, and many of the reasons are similar to those for teachers and clergy: as authoritative, socially-powerful people who hold the trust of their patients, they have unusual access to people's bodies, and the same needs and weaknesses as other people, hence the need for the medical professions to have excellent ethical standards and watchdogs is clear.

All American doctors are governed by standards of both the American Medical Association (AMA) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). The AMA code of medical ethics states that sexual misconduct includes all sexual contact with current patients, and this naturally includes minors.<sup>51</sup> It also outlines cautions about sexual relations with former patients, realizing that their previous physician-patient relationship would or could influence current behavior.<sup>52</sup> The ethics guidelines also exclude relationships with key third parties.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Abraham Verghese, "A Doctor's Touch," TED Global 2011, accessed December 20, 2018, [https://www.ted.com/talks/abraham\\_verghese\\_a\\_doctor\\_s\\_touch/transcript#t-421195](https://www.ted.com/talks/abraham_verghese_a_doctor_s_touch/transcript#t-421195).

<sup>51</sup> AMA Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs, "Opinion 8.14 - Sexual Misconduct in the Practice of Medicine," *AMA Journal of Ethics* 17, no. 5 (December 1989): 432-434, last updated March 1992, accessed December 20, 2018, <https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/article/ama-code-medical-ethics-opinions-observing-professional-boundaries-and-meeting-professional>.

<sup>52</sup> "Sexual or romantic relationships between a physician and a former patient may be unduly influenced by the previous physician-patient relationship." AMA Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs, "Opinion 8.14."

<sup>53</sup> "Physicians should refrain from sexual or romantic interactions with key third parties when it is based on the use or exploitation of trust, knowledge, influence, or emotions derived from a professional relationship." AMA Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs, "Opinion 8.145 - Sexual or Romantic Relations between Physicians and Key Third Parties," *AMA Journal of Ethics* 17, no. 5 (December 1989): 432-434, last updated March 1992, accessed December 20, 2018, <https://journalofethics.ama->

The AAP policy statement says, “Pediatricians should avoid behavior that patients and parents might misunderstand as having sexual or inappropriate social meaning. Romantic and sexual involvement between physicians and patients is unacceptable.”<sup>54</sup> The policy also reminds pediatricians to take note of cultural expectations of touch, and the potential for confusion in the child, and that touch can be comforting and necessary in interactions with children. However, especially in children with trauma associated with sexual misconduct on the part of others, touch should be kept to a minimum.<sup>55</sup> This is consistent with the message given to the lawyers in their guidelines,

Pediatricians usually prefer warm, friendly relationships with their patients. The need to avoid untoward personal intimacy should not lead to a cold, indifferent manner in their interactions with patients or family members. Many cultures expect physical expressions of care and concern in times of personal crisis, including sickness. Pediatricians might well be seen as unsympathetic and excessively remote if they avoid handshakes or other socially approved touching during emotional encounters with families. In most social groups in the United States, interaction with children is likely to involve appropriate physical contact such as hugging. Pediatricians should be aware of their patients’ customs and personal and religious beliefs. In addition, it may be helpful to recognize that some kinds of touching may be confusing or offensive to children, depending on their stage of physical and emotional maturation. For example, certain children may have strong preferences about whether their physical examination is performed by a male or female pediatrician or whether someone else besides the pediatrician is present during the examination. Anticipatory discussion of these issues should reduce fears and misunderstandings and lead to enhanced pediatrician, patient, and family comfort.<sup>56</sup>

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assn.org/article/ama-code-medical-ethics-opinions-observing-professional-boundaries-and-meeting-professional.

<sup>54</sup> Committee on Bioethics, “Pediatrician-Family-Patient Relationships: Managing the Boundaries,” *Pediatrics Pediatrics* 124, no. 6 (December 2009): 1685–1688, accessed December 20, 2018, <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/124/6/1685>.

<sup>55</sup> Committee on Bioethics, “Pediatrician-Family-Patient Relationships,” 1687.

<sup>56</sup> Committee on Bioethics, “Pediatrician-Family-Patient Relationships,” 1687.

## Teachers

Teachers have had to change their approach to touch significantly over the last 50 years, much of it for the better as corporal punishment was banned, and inappropriate touch has been spotlighted. Sadly, there are still occasions where it is clear that teachers and sports coaches have abused their positions of authority and touch to exploit children in their care.<sup>57</sup> This is clearly contrary to all expectations of their professional duties. Fear of the repercussions of bad touch have sometimes led the professional bodies for teachers to consider no-touch policies. However, in 1997, the National Association for the Education of Young Children issued a policy statement to schools and other organizations:

No-touch policies are misguided efforts that fail to recognize the importance of touch to children's healthy development. Touch is especially important for infants and toddlers. Warm, responsive touches convey regard and concern for children of any age. Adults should be sensitive to ensuring that their touches (such as pats on the back, hugs, or ruffling the child's hair) are welcomed by the children and appropriate to their individual characteristics and cultural experience.<sup>58</sup>

It is imperative that teachers are thoroughly trained in safe touch guidelines, and that inappropriate behavior is always challenged. However, it would also be tragic if no-touch

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<sup>57</sup> There have been several highly profiled cases in the news recently about sports coaches abusing their charges: both in gymnastics (as in the case of Larry Nassar: Christine Hauser, "Ex-Michigan State Athlete's Lawsuit Says Larry Nassar Drugged and Raped Her on Camera," *New York Times*, September 13, 2018, accessed December 20, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/13/us/larry-nassar-rape-msu.html>), and other athletes (as in the cases of Jerry Sandusky, Dr. Richard Strauss, and the University of Southern California's on-campus gynecologist: Catie Edmondson, "More Than 100 Former Ohio State Students Allege Sexual Misconduct," July 20, 2018, accessed December 20, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/20/us/politics/sexual-misconduct-ohio-state.html>). These cases are simply the ones which have been revealed, it is undoubtedly true that there are many more unreported cases of sexual abuse in schools and gyms.

<sup>58</sup> National Association for the Education of Young Children, "Prevention of Child Abuse in Early Childhood Programs and the Responsibilities of Early Childhood Professionals to Prevent Child Abuse: A Position Statement of the NAEYC," last modified 1996, accessed December 20, 2018, <https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/PSCHAB98.PDF>.

rules were introduced out of fear. Creating the balance is the challenge facing all professionals who engage with children and at-risk adults in particular. More recently, guidelines for teachers have increasingly been leaning towards a “no-touch” policy, as in the NEA 2006 guidelines “Teach but don’t touch.”<sup>59</sup> This is a sad response to an admittedly scary situation for teachers who risk losing everything if there is a false allegation against them, although an understandable reaction to the deluge of true incidents which have been reported in the last decade about inappropriate teacher/student abuse. The risk of a child experiencing neglect through lack of touch becomes the alternative extreme.

## **Clergy**

This paper has already highlighted in the first two chapters many of the beautiful theological and spiritual benefits of clergy touch and would that we could simply stop there. However, clergy are all humans too and very susceptible to all aspects of sinful life and choices.

An extensive report in 2011 examined the prevalence, pattern, and basis for sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests.<sup>60</sup> The findings reveal that the sexual misconduct of Roman Catholic priests reflects that of men in the general public; far more sexual abuse happens statistically by men who are not called to a celibate lifestyle than

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<sup>59</sup> National Education Association, “Teach but Don’t Touch: practical advice for school employees on avoiding false allegations of improper conduct with students,” last modified 2006, accessed December 20, 2018, <https://www.kea.org/uploads/files/Legal/TeachButDontTouch.pdf>.

<sup>60</sup> John Jay College Research Team, “The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950-2010: A Report Presented to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops by the John Jay College Research Team,” United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, last modified May 2011, accessed December 20, 2018, <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/upload/The-Causes-and-Context-of-Sexual-Abuse-of-Minors-by-Catholic-Priests-in-the-United-States-1950-2010.pdf>.

those who are.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, the levels of abuse by clergy from all denominations is consistently similar to that of the general public.<sup>62</sup> The report also stated that, “Many accused priests began abusing years after they were ordained, at times of increased job stress, social isolation, and decreased contact with peers.”<sup>63</sup> The report also found that problems with intimacy pre-seminary was also a risk factor, as were being abused as a child, lack of healthy education about sexual matters, and lack of close social bonds. The inability to make close personal relationships may indeed drive some people to the priesthood (or other caring profession), as a means of finding relationship through a formal structure. However, those priests who were abusers did not differ significantly in psychological testing pre-seminary from other priests who did not abuse.

At an Anglican ordination, the candidate for ordination makes a number of vows, including the vow to “be diligent to frame and fashion [their own life] and the *lives* of [their] *families*, according to the Doctrine of Christ; and to make both [*themselves*] and [their families], as much as in [them] lies, wholesome examples to the flock of Christ?”<sup>64</sup> It is this vow before God to be a wholesome example that makes clergy failure so hard. No one grows up wanting to fail morally. However, clergy make deliberate steps to promise to God and to their communities to be a positive example. The structure of the church places them in positions of moral authority, and their failure to uphold these positions wreaks havoc way beyond even their immediate relationships. The recent,

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<sup>61</sup> John Jay College Research Team, “*The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors*,” 2.

<sup>62</sup> For example, Orthodox Reform, accessed December 20, 2018, <https://orthodoxreform.wordpress.com/details-sexual-abuse-scandals-in-the-greek-orthodox-church>.

<sup>63</sup> John Jay College Research Team, “*The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors*,” 4.

<sup>64</sup> Anglican Church in North America, *Texts for Common Prayer: Containing Forms for Daily Morning Prayer, Daily Evening Prayer and the Holy Communion, as Approved by the College of Bishops for Use within the Province; Together with the Ordinal of the Anglican Church in North America A.D. 2013* (Newport Beach, CA.: Anglican House Publishers, 2013).

publicly-revealed moral failure of some clergy has had a significant effect of lessening the influence on society that the church held for nearly two millennia. The consequence for the church has been ridicule in the press, a loss of confidence by millennials, and an indictment for all believers.

Perhaps the most disappointing aspect of the research into abuse by clergy is that it does not differ from the levels of the general public. The men (and women) who have been ordained to the clergy have made vows to God and to the world, but far too many have grievously failed to honor those vows.

A detailed synthesis of educator misconduct research reveals some characteristics of offenders which may well be reflected by clergy, including that it was established amongst offenders that “teachers whose job description includes time with individual students, such as music teachers or coaches, are more likely to sexually abuse than other teachers.”<sup>65</sup> This risk factor applies strongly to clergy, who often have privileged, private access to children when parents will extend disproportionate trust by virtue of their calling and spiritual authority. In addition, the research found that, “The limited available data...indicate that teachers who sexually abuse belie the stereotype of an abuser as an easily identifiable danger to children. Many are those most celebrated in their profession.”<sup>66</sup>

The context of a school is very similar to that of a church. In both, the adults are people who are in positions of trust and authority. Students are expected to obey and be compliant to the instructions of those in authority and there is a defined power and status

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<sup>65</sup> Charol Shakeshaft, “Educator Sexual Misconduct: A Synthesis of Existing Literature,” U. S. Department of Education, last modified 2004, accessed December 23, 2018, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED483143.pdf>, 22.

<sup>66</sup> Charol Shakeshaft, “Educator Sexual Misconduct,” 22.



distinction. This creates a context where it is very hard for a child to believe their voice will be heard, especially where the predator is someone who is well-liked and respected by the community at large.

Grooming of children as a preparation for abuse by clergy enables them to build a relationship which will buy the child's silence. This is consistent with the grooming techniques of teachers.<sup>67</sup> Abusers use their positions to obtain secrecy through manipulation, gifts, lies, and occasionally by force. Eventually, they can persuade the child that the outcome of telling will reflect on the child and not on them, leading to guilt and shame silencing the child.

At the time of writing, *#whyididntreport* is making daily headlines in the news. Research has repeatedly shown that non-reporting is common: "Several studies estimate that only about 6 percent of all children report sexual abuse by an adult to someone who can do something about it. The other 94 percent do not tell anyone or talk only to a friend. (And they swear their friend to secrecy)."<sup>68</sup>

Karen McClintock takes stock of the temptation of codependency for clergy within their congregations; stress and burnout resulting from an overdeveloped sense of responsibility leading to 80+ hour work weeks, sacrificing family time to pastoral demands, and eventually pastors having such high stress levels that they make poor choices, "doing things they would not normally do."<sup>69</sup> McClintock highlights how congregations reward pastors for overwork, praising them for their commitment and availability, thereby both promoting and facilitating unhealthy work/life balances. This

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<sup>67</sup> Charol Shakeshaft, "Educator Sexual Misconduct," 30.

<sup>68</sup> Charol Shakeshaft, "Educator Sexual Misconduct," 34.

<sup>69</sup> Karen A. McClintock, *Preventing Sexual Abuse in Congregations: A Resource for Leaders* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2004), 114.

produces fertile ground for pastors to begin to seek to have all their needs met within the community, tipping them over the moral boundary into promiscuity and abusive behavior (sometimes towards others, but also at times in self-harm: seeking relief from the stress in alcohol, sex, or other drugs).<sup>70</sup>

The danger of burnout for clergy is high and there is extensive literature on the subject. Along the way to burnout there is exhaustion, the potential for depression, and the development of vocational doubt and a crisis of faith. All of these leave clergy vulnerable to turning to inappropriate ways of meeting their needs for rest, being known, and for comfort.

Pastoral counseling provides hope, encouragement and healing to many. However, it also opens the door to potentially unhealthy emotional and psychological connections between clergy and parishioner, particularly if the clergyperson is over-extending beyond their skill and knowledge base. The temptation for clergy to assume that by virtue of their ordination they are competent to deal with complex psychological or emotional trauma is significant. This overconfidence can lead them into situations of doing harm to their counselee, and the risk of responding inappropriately either “overtly through the crossing of boundaries or covertly through addictions.”<sup>71</sup>

This can be particularly true when dealing with individuals who have experienced significant trauma in their lives who allow a clergyperson into the early moments or days of exploring the associated pain. Often a priest is one of the first people a victim of trauma will trust. Perhaps the priest will even be invited into a place of trauma (such as after an accident or unexpected disaster) and asked to pray or comfort the hurting there.

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<sup>70</sup> Karen A. McClintock, *Preventing Sexual Abuse in Congregations*, 114.

<sup>71</sup> Karen A. McClintock, *Preventing Sexual Abuse in Congregations*, chapter 8.

This is an extraordinary opportunity for the clergy person to speak God's words of healing and truth and to pray with hope. The unique bond which two people can experience in the moment of the fracture of trauma can be deep and meaningful, but also dangerous for both.<sup>72</sup> Clergy must be alert to both the opportunity and risk of being involved with parishioners in crisis moments in their lives. It is an honor and a privilege to walk with someone in their moments of deepest grief and pain, but careful debriefing afterwards with a trusted friend, a spiritual advisor, or a supervisor is vital.

Psychoanalysts and counselors are required to have supervisors. But for many clergy, there is no one to turn to. Within the Anglican church, the Bishop cares for the clergy in their Diocese, and it is vital that this is a relationship with mutual trust. Clergy should also take steps to ensure that they have accountability partnerships either with other clergy or with designated individuals, preferably outside their church environment.

A final danger point for clergy is that so many of their relationships are multi-layered. There is the relationship of pastor/parishioner but often the same person may be their neighbor, or child's parent, or even their friend. This leads to complexity in relationships with delicate care needed by the clergyperson to ensure that appropriate boundaries are not transgressed.

## **Conclusion**

The evidence clearly shows that touch is powerful. It can be a clear way of expressing comfort and reassurance, that someone is seen and loved. It is a means of communication and utilized in medical, psychological, and physical care. Healthy touch is deeply Biblical. It comes from the creative heart of God who also initiates divine touch

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<sup>72</sup> Karen A. McClintock, *Preventing Sexual Abuse in Congregations*, 120-122.

through the incarnation. However, as in all created things, there is brokenness and sin associated with touch, and the harm which is done by unhealthy touch is proportionally damaging as healthy touch is life-giving.

As touch can be deeply healthy, in contrast it can be misused and create deep pain. The reasons why one person would harm another are manifold, and a detailed exploration is outside the scope of this thesis-project. Having discussed a number of reasons why touch is sometimes misused, it is important finally also to note that some misuse of touch occurs because of mental illness or incapacity.

Priests use touch both sacramentally and in pastoral contexts and Chapter 4 will explore clergy experiences of how and where their seminary education included – or did not include – instruction for appropriate use of touch, their current practice in the use of touch, and specific ways in which they could improve their intentionality with touch, whilst guarding themselves and their parishioners against unhealthy touch.

## CHAPTER FOUR CLERGY EXPERIENCE OF TOUCH

Touching someone while praying for them in the midst of pain is a powerful means by which we can pass on the healing power of Christ. I have felt on several occasions His healing power flow from me to another person when touching them appropriately during prayer.

—Survey respondent

### Introduction

Having looked at the Biblical and scientific bases for healthy touch, this chapter looks at clergy experience and understanding of touch. Chapter 5 contains guidelines for clergy as to the safe use of touch in their pastoral and sacramental ministry, building on this information. It also contains advice for seminaries and churches.

In order to explore current clergy understanding of the role of touch in ministry, a questionnaire was sent to 161 DOMA clergy. To improve the gender balance, 141 women clergy in the ACNA Province were also invited.<sup>1</sup> There were a total of 70 responses overall. Of these respondents, one was a retired Bishop, 50 were priests, and 19 were deacons. Forty men responded and 30 women. The vast majority, 61, were married, 5 were divorcees, 3 were single, and one person did not answer that question. The age breakdown was: 10 clergy under 35, 18 between 35 and 50, 24 in the 50-65 bracket, and 15 over 65 years old.

The survey asked questions about clergy seminary training, their current church policies on touch, and their experience and views on touch in sacramental, prayer, and pastoral ministry. Finally, the survey sought the respondents' personal views on touch.

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<sup>1</sup> The female clergy of the ACNA have a Facebook page for clergy and postulants. It is a closed group. For the purposes of this project, the clergy were invited to complete the questionnaire. The postulants were excluded. The questionnaire was sent out on Aug 17, 2018 and results came in between August 17 and November 17, 2018.

Following the survey, ten respondents (out of 30 who had indicated that they were willing to be re-contacted) were approached for a further conversation.<sup>2</sup> These interview respondents were chosen deliberately, and not randomly. They were selected to ensure a cross-section of ages, genders, roles, and with an eye to their questionnaire responses, looking for both those who affirmed touch and were more negative about it. At the last minute, two of the interview candidates had to withdraw because of a family emergency. Hence, eight candidates were interviewed.

Most quotations in this chapter are from the results of the anonymous questionnaire, unless attributed to one of the interview candidates (A - G). Both the questionnaire and the interview questions are included in Appendices A and B.

### **Seminary Training**

The overwhelming response from clergy was that there was very little explicit content in their formal theological education at seminary on sacramental touch, and almost none on the theology of touch. For the eight respondents who remembered some training, it was normally practical advice on various matters: how to hold a baby for baptism, or how to hold ashes at a funeral. It should be noted that neither of these instances are places where a clergy person would expect feedback. In addition, some respondents recalled being warned about the dangers of touch. But 81% of respondents said there was no training on touch at all.<sup>3</sup> This was somewhat disappointing.

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<sup>2</sup> The interviews were conducted between November 28, 2018 and December 6, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Four clergy (5%) referenced the *Ministry Safe* material which is currently being developed in the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic. This material will be invaluable when it is completed. These four participants had all been involved in beta testing. It is hoped that it will be ready for publication in 2019.

The responses on education for pastoral touch were more encouraging. Mostly this aligned with healing prayer training, where there was an emphasis placed on appropriate touch. However, even with healing prayer training, “Most of the training focused on maintaining proper boundaries and how to touch or hug without giving offense.”<sup>4</sup> This approach – warning of the dangers of touch – was the most common answer from all respondents. Any training received was seen to be “reactive in nature and not proactive or positive.”<sup>5</sup> The two most encouraging responses both came from a CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) experience: “In my supervised ministry practicum, my supervising pastor took me on a hospital visit; he modeled touching the patient for me; he encouraged me to not be afraid to ‘appropriately’ touch people as a literal incarnational ministry of Christ.”<sup>6</sup> “In CPE I was assigned to a hospice unit. We were encouraged to touch patients’ arms or shoulders if they were experiencing emotional distress.”<sup>7</sup> These two positive experiences stood out in a sea of comments which emphasized the refrain of “touch should be avoided as it is dangerous.”

### **Church Policies**

When respondents were asked about policies in their churches, almost all had a child-safety policy (which is now a requirement for all churches in the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic), and over half had a sexual harassment policy, with another one third of respondents indicating that a policy was in the process of being written. Churches are

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<sup>4</sup> Questionnaire response.

<sup>5</sup> Questionnaire response.

<sup>6</sup> Questionnaire response.

<sup>7</sup> Questionnaire response.

clearly aware of the dangers of inappropriate touch with children and are taking appropriate steps to guard against unhealthy touch with adults as well, and this is to be applauded. Roughly half of the clergy indicated that their church had a complaints procedure in place for unhealthy touch.

One interesting observation was that over half the clergy surveyed had guidelines for their greeters and ushers which included a section on “healthy touch”. These would include suggestions such as encouragement to shake hands at the door as people came in.

When asked if touch was referred to in any other staff documents, the vast majority of the respondents replied that they either did not know, or indicated it was not covered, or thought there “might be something in a staff handbook.”

### **Touch in Sacramental ministry**

From a sacramental perspective, you can’t have a sacrament without touch--at the very least, touching of the elements of the sacrament (water, bread, wine), but more often some amount of touch with the people receiving the sacrament. It’s a fundamental part of an incarnational faith. So when touch is involved in these sacred moments, it’s a way not only of connecting with those receiving the sacrament, but also of affirming that bodies matter, that our physicality is a good gift from God, that God meets us in our embodied-ness, no matter the age, shape, or appearance of those bodies.

—a respondent

Forty respondents indicated that they were very conscious of the way they used touch during the course of a service, but from their comments it appeared mainly limited to the use of touch in the distribution of the Eucharist, where four respondents spoke of the power of the incarnational moment in giving the host.

When people are at the rail for communion, I place the host in each communicant’s hand and allow my hand to make contact with theirs. People will often raise their heads to look into my eyes or smile or acknowledge the touch in



some positive way. I feel that this helps connect my people to Christ in an intimate and silent but safe way.<sup>8</sup>

Another respondent commented on how they “bless children and adults, making the sign of the cross on them.”<sup>9</sup> Other clergy spoke of touching someone on the arm or shoulder if they were distressed. One respondent mentioned “handshakes and hugs during ‘The Peace’ are perhaps our most obvious times of intentional touch during worship.”<sup>10</sup>

There were also numerous comments highlighting the dangers of being misunderstood, of inappropriate conduct, and general caution with both men and women. A number spoke of avoiding all touch or being careful not to hug and only shake hands, adding, “But if a clergy isn't careful, the hugging can seem invasive, and the shaking of hands can seem cold and distant.”<sup>11</sup>

One clergy person commented, “Once, while I was making the sign of the cross on the forehead of a child during distribution of the elements, I cried because I knew that may be the last time I had the privilege of blessing that child because the family was relocating several hours away.”<sup>12</sup> The tenderness of this moment was clear, and it also highlights the fact that the relational connection between parishioner and clergy is complex. Clergy not only operate as clergy, but also as friends in a community. This crossover of roles will be explored later as it can be a place of great joy for clergy, but also contains some risk.

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<sup>8</sup> Questionnaire response.

<sup>9</sup> Questionnaire response.

<sup>10</sup> Questionnaire response.

<sup>11</sup> Questionnaire response.

<sup>12</sup> Questionnaire response.

## Sacramental Moments

Touch in the Eucharist was clearly seen as important in the survey results. A typical response was also given in an interview, “Whenever I give the bread, I always light grasp on the underside of the hand; believing in that moment in the spiritual connection which is embodied in the human connection.”<sup>13</sup> A number of clergy mentioned that they deliberately touched the hand of a communicant either when giving the bread or administering the chalice. One added that they also extend a further touch to a shoulder if they knew a person was in a time of crisis, using the distribution also as a time for prayer for parishioners.

When asked specifically about the use of touch in baptism, almost all respondents said it was either important or very important for them.

The importance of touch decreased slightly for funerals, where the majority replied that it was important but not as critical as at baptism. However, as one respondent said,

Re: funerals, above: touch isn't essential, per the liturgy, for the living at the funeral (unless there's a passing of the peace or Eucharist); but the commendation requires a laying of hands on the casket or vessel holding the remains. Technically, I guess this isn't human touch, since the body/remains are no longer alive. But still it strikes me as a profoundly powerful, human, and necessary moment, liturgically and sacramentally. It just wouldn't be the same if I spoke the words of commendation without laying hands on the remains.<sup>14</sup>

Touch can be powerful even at a symbolic moment as the clergy commit a soul to God.

When passing the Peace, 60% said touch was very important, and 27% said it was important. There were a few people who responded that it was not important or had

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<sup>13</sup> Personal interview with Candidate D, December 4, 2018.

<sup>14</sup> Questionnaire response.

minimal importance. Passing the Peace without touch would seem a little distant for most.

Weddings had the broadest spread of responses, with roughly equal numbers suggesting touch was neutral, important and very important. Many clergy enfold the couple's hands at the blessing, either with their hands or with the stole representing the Holy Spirit binding the couple together.<sup>15</sup>

Anointing with oil was mainly discussed in the context of healing prayer. However, one priest stressed the beauty of "ashing" on Ash Wednesday. The same priest discussed the power of making the sign of the cross on a forehead when a person comes with crossed arms to the communion table.<sup>16</sup>

A rare moment of intimate touch comes on Maundy Thursday. Traditionally, this is a day when clergy may wash their parishioners' feet in humble imitation of the way Jesus washed his disciples' feet at the Last Supper.<sup>17</sup> This public service is deeply moving and is done in a worshipful setting. It can be equally moving for those washing, and those being washed. It is one of many moments of deep joy for clergy.<sup>18</sup>

### Joy in Sacramental Touch

The responses to the question as to what brings joy in sacramental touch were wide-ranging and enthusiastic. Notable was the word "connection" which was used (without prompting) in 16 of the comments and in a number of variations: *human*

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<sup>15</sup> Personal interview with Candidate D, December 4, 2018 (hands). Personal interview with Candidate F, November 28, 2018 (stole).

<sup>16</sup> Personal interview with Candidate E, December 5, 2018.

<sup>17</sup> John 13:1-20.

<sup>18</sup> Interview candidate D spoke of this as a highlight in the liturgical calendar.

*connection, pastoral connection, personal connection, family connection.* This pointed to the incarnational significance of touch for many of the clergy in the sacraments. Clergy were recognizing the immense responsibility of standing “in the place of Christ” when ministering the sacraments and the implications for the significance of their touch seemed to grow as they contemplated their privilege of those moments. With some awe, clergy described themselves in the questionnaire as “a conduit for the Spirit’s presence in the moment,” “touch...which emphasizes the oneness Christ gives,” “I am representing Christ to his people,” and “my hands are being used as the hands of Christ.”<sup>19</sup>

Another common theme was of touch expressing love and comfort, especially to the grieving and discouraged. Touch was described as helping people to feel known and seen, and to be a part of family.

Yet, a number of respondents spoke of being “terrified” of touch, and the fear their touch would be misinterpreted. This led to their concluding that touch should be avoided, and a number explained how they avoid touch in their ministry.

### **Touch in Healing Prayer**

The sense in which the Holy Spirit is connecting us and coursing through us, ministering to those for whom we pray in ways that we cannot describe or fully understand; the sense in which our touch is another form of compassion and empathy that allows to enter into another's pain.

—a respondent

Touch was seen as important by most clergy as a tool in healing prayer. Although eight respondents said they used minimal or little touch in their prayer ministry, 48 indicated a deliberate use of touch. Over half the clergy (41 responses), however,

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<sup>19</sup> Questionnaire response.

indicated that their church did not have any written policy or guidelines for the use of touch in prayer ministry, 17 said they did have a policy and the remaining clergy did not know.

In the interviews, touch in healing prayer was discussed at greater length. The candidates all spoke of their use of touch in prayer ministry, detailing when and how they touch. Most of the answers were straightforward: don't rub or pat, use discretion as to where you touch, be aware of the body language of the person requesting prayer, be aware of their personal history as far as you are able. All of this advice is included in the guidelines in Chapter 5.

### Praying for Others

When asked about the use of touch in prayer, most clergy responded affirmatively, indicating that they recognized the value in prayer ministry, mainly through the opportunity to convey comfort and connection. Most respondents (59) indicated that they regularly use oil when praying for healing and appreciated the holy moment of anointing. Anointing on the forehead, or on occasion on the hands, was seen as a valuable way of connecting people with God's healing touch. "Praying for a parishioner I anointed them with oil – the parishioner felt extreme comfort by both the cross being made on their forehead and by the feel of the oil."<sup>20</sup>

The results for anointing with oil, healing prayer, and praying for the afflicted were all very similar, with a few clergy indicating they did not use touch but the vast

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<sup>20</sup> Questionnaire response.

majority emphasizing touch as a valuable part of their prayer time. One respondent added,

The touch was a response to a request by a woman for healing prayer. The individual asked for prayer for her hands, and I asked her if I could hold her hands while I prayed and anointed her hands. She willingly gave her consent. I followed up with her the next week, and she thanked me for the experience of touch while I prayed.<sup>21</sup>

Most of those who responded also indicated that prayer in a public setting was normally done in pairs. Extended prayer sessions are also often done in pairs, especially when involving lay prayer ministers. One-on-one prayer will be addressed later in “pastoral touch.” More detailed guidelines are given in Chapter 5.

In the interviews, one priest indicated how important it is sometimes to withhold or delay touch in prayer ministry.<sup>22</sup> In the moment of deepest distress, the supplicant might be crying and the temptation to touch would be strong, as a (very human) desire to comfort is deeply rooted in all of us. However, it is good to be reminded that this might be the very moment when God is doing his deepest work and, therefore, be careful not to be disruptive by touching too soon. Clearly, sometimes the level of distress warrants Kleenex as well as a comforting touch or hug. However, clergy should keep careful watch on the supplicant’s body language and not interrupt when God is at work.

One interview candidate emphasized that the reason why people refuse touch can be because of unresolved issues – including abuse or trauma – but also may be for as simple a reason as painful arthritis or another ailment.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Questionnaire response.

<sup>22</sup> Personal interview with Candidate A, November 28, 2018.

<sup>23</sup> Personal interview with Candidate D, December 4, 2018.

There was some difference in opinion as to whether it was acceptable to touch a knee in prayer ministry. Two priests mentioned, when interviewed, that when praying with someone of the same gender a touch on the knee can be appropriate. Both indicated that it would be a gesture which says, “I am still here with you.”<sup>24</sup> A third priest warned that it is not always possible to know the gender orientation of people you are praying with, and so cautioned against touching a knee as being too intimate.<sup>25</sup>

In all the decisions about touch, repeatedly it was remarked that discretion and sensitivity should be used. In one, very unusual case, an interview candidate spoke of praying for a woman who needed prayer regarding a demonic presence in her life. The woman had stated that the demon had “entered her through her feet.” So with the woman’s permission “the prayer ministers knelt and took off her shoes and held her feet. We prayed for the Holy Spirit to come and to follow the same path the demon had taken and to bring cleansing fire to get rid of every part of any negative or demonic influence in her life ... and for the Holy Spirit then to bear fruit.”<sup>26</sup> This case indicates the need for great sensitivity. Touching feet in prayer ministry is highly unusual! This priest also emphasized that, in general, touch is not used when dealing with demons. The main tools at that point are the authority of ordination and voice: standing as Christ’s representative, filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>24</sup> Personal interview with Candidates A and F, November 28, 2018.

<sup>25</sup> Personal interview with Candidate D, December 4, 2018.

<sup>26</sup> Personal interview with Candidate D, December 4, 2018.

## Joy in Healing Prayer Touch

There was significant repetition with the answers to the previous question when asked about what brings most joy in prayer ministry: “connection” again the most commonly used word. Other repeated concepts were: breaking through isolation, helping people to know they are not alone, and a recognition of the “goodness of embodiment.” A note of warning was issued, though, when one person said, “sometimes we touch more for our own benefit than for the recipient.”<sup>27</sup> This is something that prayer ministers need to be acutely conscious of as they reach out to touch others and will be expanded on in Chapter 5.

Others noted the sensible guidelines of asking first, touching not stroking, and being very aware of where they were touching. Some took note how careful you need to be if praying with the opposite sex, and the benefits of praying in pairs. Finally, as one respondent noted, when healing is accompanied by heat and God’s healing touch literally radiates in their bodies, that can be a wonderfully encouraging experience clearly for the one receiving prayer, but also for the prayer minister.

In particular, two respondents noted that when they pray for others God sometimes uses heat in their hands. This heat is generally reassuring to both the person giving and the one receiving prayer; however, one clergy commented on the questionnaire:

Praying for someone I often look for where I see the Holy Spirit on them, especially on their head, shoulders. Last Sunday I was praying for someone with a tumor in their ear - I did not touch them, but put my hand near the area, and felt the power of God in my hand; the person did not say anything, but it is not unusual that someone says they felt power/energy coming from my hand; once someone told me that they felt so much heat they were grateful I didn't touch them.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Questionnaire response.

<sup>28</sup> Questionnaire response.



## **Touch in Pastoral Ministry**

Clearly, touch is used by most clergy in pastoral ministry. Pastoral conversations often take place one-on-one in private spaces. However, pastoral ministry also happens naturally in public spaces. For example, in conversations in the narthex or sanctuary before or after services, or in a coffee shop, for instance.

### **Public Pastoral Moments**

Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, the responses to whether touch was important when either greeting people or as they left church was not rated particularly highly. It was seen as “moderately” important rather than “highly” important. Seven respondents did not think clergy greeting people with touch as they came into church was important. However, greeting with a friendly handshake was seen as an important role for lay greeters. Bidding parishioners goodbye at the end of a service, either by clergy or laity, was seen as more important than doing so on arrival.

Most clergy recognized that they needed to be cautious when using touch, even within the context of a public space. A number indicated that they shook hands with congregants after the service, noting that some “escape through the side door.” A few regarded the opportunities to greet someone as they left the church as valuable.

Physically greeting and sending is delightful because it's a physical manifestation of my joy to see them, to worship with them – they matter to me, I'm glad they're here. It also expresses/affirms a certain level of intimacy in community. I don't give the same physical touch to everyone – a handshake and an arm around a person mean two different things.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Questionnaire response.

Not only is it true that different parishioners interpret touch in different ways, but clergy each also have their story and their personal approaches to touch. “All our clergy shake hands with the congregation as they are leaving. I, as a middle-aged woman, seem to be a safe person to many of the parishioners-and I tend to get and give lots of hugs also. My male British rector is not a ‘hugger’ but does shake hands.”<sup>30</sup> The rule for clergy not to go beyond their own comfort level is important. If a person is not a hugger, then they should not hug as it will only become awkward and clumsy.

There are some parishioners I regularly hug when greeting them on Sundays, and others whom I regularly shake hands with. If they're regular huggers, I don't usually ask for consent each time. Recently, one man whom I normally greet with a hug, I could only reach him for a handshake the first time I saw him that morning. Later, he jokingly said, “I was afraid you'd decided you didn't like me anymore” as he opened his arms for a hug. There was nothing creepy about it; it just felt like an affirmation of our appreciation for each other. It made me feel loved and valued. Also, most of my parishioners are at least old enough to be my parents—which doesn't eliminate the possibility of uncomfortable touch, certainly (whether initiated by me or them) but does affect the dynamic of it.<sup>31</sup>

More than half of the responses once again included the term or concept of “connection” when discussing the value of touch in public pastoral ministry.

Yesterday I gave a hug to a man who was really hurting. He had started crying during our meeting. I did not ask him if I could hug him, I just embraced him at the end of our meeting. I wanted him to know that he was not alone. I wanted to affirm the bridge between us and make it secure so that he could call on me again in the future for emotional and spiritual support.<sup>32</sup>

Finally, in this section, when asked about a written policy on touch covering public or private pastoral ministry, only 16 respondents were aware of a formal policy regarding touch in pastoral situations. Some referred to *Ministry Safe* or vaguely

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<sup>30</sup> Questionnaire response.

<sup>31</sup> Questionnaire response.

<sup>32</sup> Questionnaire response.

indicated that “DOMA has something.” Any policy that their church might have was clearly not viewed as critical.

### Negative Experiences

When questioned about whether they had ever had a negative reaction to touch in a pastoral situation, 31 respondents answered “no.” However, 20 (around a quarter) had a story to share of a negative reaction, a higher response rate than expected. The stories varied from a child pulling back because they did not want to be blessed, to more significant stories of people projecting their unresolved pain onto the pastor. The reported reasons included “issues with her father,” and the use of “culturally unacceptable” touch. One respondent described an encounter with a parishioner who had recently experienced the bereavement of a parent.

My wife and I were counseling a lady in the church who had an issue with a liturgical change. We had talked with her about what was going on and she had cited issues with her father as why she was reacting to the change and seemed to be very upset, I don't really even think with us, but was projecting issues with her father. She went to get up and my wife asked if we could pray with her and as she did, my wife put out her hand toward the lady's shoulder as if to give comfort, when the lady pushed it away and said that she did not want to pray or be touched, as that was what her father used to do. When we called later that evening to follow-up with her, she apologized and said she had lots of issues from her father and was embarrassed by how she had reacted. We chatted for a bit, and then my wife and I prayed with her over the phone. The lady was responsive to us at church the following Sunday and gave us hugs. As to how it made me feel, I think I was a little saddened to see how much of “an infected wound” this particular lady still had from her father and a bit shocked since she was in leadership in the church and had always seemed very “quiet and gentle.” There was obviously a lot going on beneath the surface. I think my wife reached out intuitively in compassion not realizing the hurts that were still there. The reaction of this particular lady was very atypical of most people's reactions, but is a reminder of how hurting people may react very differently.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Questionnaire response.

Interestingly, all the negative stories involved what we would generally consider “safe” touch: a touch on a shoulder or a side hug. However, mostly the respondents had generally not asked for permission, and they had felt that they had learned from the experience always to ask before touching. The narrative of deep pain being a major hindrance to the acceptance of touch is not surprising, and highlights the risk involved with reaching out to our congregants.

Clergy can sometimes become too casual with their touch: an over-assumption of familiarity that one respondent commented on.

A regular parishioner, a new mother with some special needs, seeks a side hug from me every week. This she appreciates. Once while hugging her I kissed the top of her head, a peck, and she told me straight away that she thought that inappropriate. I thought she would appreciate this gesture of affection. I was wrong. I felt badly, embarrassed, introspective.<sup>34</sup>

And yet, another respondent in a similar situation reported, “One of our elderly women was upset and I gave her a side hug and a kiss on top of her head. She came to me later and told me how much it meant to her. She felt cared for.”<sup>35</sup> Clearly, learning to read the body language of those in need of pastoral care is vital, though not always possible.

Sometimes, people will be very clear in their physical avoidance of touch:

A parishioner and key volunteer was headed out the door after serving on a Sunday – she looked tired – and I attempted to pat her on the back while saying thank you for her leadership that morning. She turned her shoulder and her body language made it clear she did not want to be touched. I stepped back and just reaffirmed how much we all appreciated her service. It was such a brief moment that it didn't seem to warrant a follow-up. It made me feel – yet again – that we live in such a suspicious and complicated time when the slightest thing may be cause for offense.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Questionnaire response.

<sup>35</sup> Questionnaire response.

<sup>36</sup> Questionnaire response.

When clergy minister to others, we also step into a person's story, which may simply be the circumstances of their week, but also includes their previous experience of prayer ministry. Sadly, this is not always done well, and clergy may end up needing to seek forgiveness for past exposure people have had to harmful encounters with prayer or pastoral ministry: "With door open and others in [the] building [I was] asked to lay hands for prayer in regards to some deep physical problems and grief; [the] person was leary because of being told she had a demon by someone who laid hands on her in high-school telling her she had a demon."<sup>37</sup> At this point, the question as to whether or not the woman did or did not have a demon becomes secondary to the additional pain caused by the perceived lack of sensitivity of previous prayer ministers. Deliverance ministry is clearly a place where touch may be essential, and yet, it must be administered with extreme caution, even as one must use language which is appropriate and does not increase or enhance fear. Speaking peace and the power of the Holy Spirit, anointing with oil, all can be powerful, yet gentle, responses to demonization, or a fear of demonization.

### Positive Experiences

Recently, during a pastoral meeting with a woman I have known for a decade, I ended up embracing her as I prayed for her, very much like a mother. It was a beautiful time, she needs healing in her relationship with her own Mother. This action seemed very healing, and she initiated the hug. Afterwards, I felt privileged to be trusted in that way, and grateful to be used in some small way to help her know that she is loved.

—a respondent

The responses flooded in to the question about the positive nature of pastoral touch; 53 respondents enthusiastically told story after story of where positive touch had affirmed,

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<sup>37</sup> Questionnaire response.

connected, and brought healing to parishioners. A fairly typical story spoke of the need for touch to address “skin hunger”: “I asked to hug an elderly woman recently. She clung to me saying... ‘no one has touched or hugged me in years.’ I didn't follow up but every time I see her, I hug her. I feel great...she feels loved.”<sup>38</sup> This comment also highlights a particular issue with touch in pastoral care. Clergy must be very aware of their own needs for affection. This particular story is benign; however, it touches on the reality that clergy are also human and that part of the calling to ministry is often a desire to meet the hurting needs of others. This can become a hunger which needs to be fed by receiving affirmative touch. Clergy must be very careful to ensure that they do not look to their parishioners to fill this need, ensuring that they have family or friends who can keep them “touch fed” and accountable.

The need for positive touch will vary depending on the parishioner’s character, personality, and history. One respondent noted, “I have an autistic parishioner. She explained that ‘hard hugs’ are something that are very soothing for her, so now I know that she wants me to hug her – hard!”<sup>39</sup> Such direct feedback from a parishioner can be very helpful but should not be accepted unquestioningly. If it is not offered spontaneously, it is helpful for the clergy to ask, particularly, perhaps, with someone whose mental or physical attributes may make it harder to read their body language.

Positive touch can also be situational and symbolic in pastoral ministry. One example was given of a pre-marital counseling session, “when [I] extended [my] hands [to the] couple to pray together after session. [I] did not ask for consent. Felt that holding hands as we prayed embodied their union with one another and God that we had been

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<sup>38</sup> Questionnaire response.

<sup>39</sup> Questionnaire response.

exploring. Good sense of peace and closure.”<sup>40</sup> Another priest spoke of the beauty of “enveloping” a couple’s hands in prayer, symbolically binding them together in the power of the Holy Spirit during a time of prayer.

Symbolic touch is not only present in the sacraments. Using touch to draw attention to deeper realities in pastoral ministry can be very helpful.

Hospital or nursing home visiting offers numerous opportunities for safe and comforting touch, often to those who are touch deprived and/or frightened. “I recently held hands with a woman at the nursing home. I didn’t ask for permission, but it felt natural and it was responded to warmly. It seemed to enhance our connection as I prayed for her and listened to her.”<sup>41</sup> However, clergy should be mindful of the vulnerability of people at times of chronic or severe sickness and be sensitive to any expression of reluctance for touch.

#### Personal view of touch

All respondents answered these questions on touch in their personal lives. Most were very aware of being touched, though 42% regarded touch neutrally, nearly 35% viewed it positively, whilst 15% viewed it very positively. A moderately negative view of personal touch was held by 9%.

When asked how aware they were at the end of a day as to whether they’d been touched, only 10% said they were not aware, and similar numbers said they were sometimes aware (41%) or always aware (49%).

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<sup>40</sup> Questionnaire response.

<sup>41</sup> Questionnaire response.

In the interviews, even without prompting, nearly every person started by saying where they were from and how that influenced their view of touch. “I’m from the South, and so am warm and I am quite a huggy person.”<sup>42</sup> Or “I’m from New England and so we didn’t touch much.”<sup>43</sup> Most interview candidates also talked about their families of origin and their approaches to touch, highlighting, “my mother didn’t touch much, she was too busy,” or deeper dysfunction in their familial relationships.<sup>44</sup> Clearly, touch experiences from childhood were seen instinctively as deeply influential on current behaviors and expectations. Clergy are very aware of their own cultural, familial contexts. They should note that they may be less aware of that of those they minister to.

Most respondents answered the question, “Which of the following words do you immediately associate with touch?” Warm (60 respondents), loving (51), reassuring (48), calming (41), were the most popular responses. However, there were also negative responses: creepy (1), claustrophobic (4), uncomfortable (9), and awkward (14). When asked about Gary Chapman’s love languages, nine clergy ranked touch as their highest love language, 25 as their second, and 21 as their third highest. This certainly implies that touch is something which clergy value and is possibly one of the attractions to the role as a caring professional.

## **Conclusion**

The results of the questionnaire were, generally, self-consistent. There were few outlying comments, and the interview candidates largely corroborated the results of the

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<sup>42</sup> Personal interview with Candidate E, December 5, 2018.

<sup>43</sup> Personal interview with Candidate B, November 30, 2018.

<sup>44</sup> Personal interview with Candidate E, December 5, 2018.



questionnaire. The responses indicated that most clergy had not thought greatly about the topic in the past, other than (for many) in a fearful manner.

There were, however, many positive reminders of the beauty of touch as a means of communicating love and affection, as well as connecting people to God, to each other, and also to themselves. The theme of connection was powerful and came across in both the more formal sacramental moments, as well as in prayer and pastoral ministry.

The lack of teaching of either the practical or the theological benefits of touch in seminaries could easily be rectified. It is to be hoped that seminaries will consider ways of training priests in the joyful, safe use of touch in many aspects of their ministry, and some suggestions as to how they could rectify that are given in Chapter 5.

## CHAPTER FIVE TOUCH GUIDELINES

For in [Christ] the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.  
—Colossians 2:9

He sanctified the body by being in it.  
—*Athanasius*

### Introduction

As has been seen in the previous chapters, clergy have the wonderful opportunity and privilege of using touch carefully in their ministry. The following guidelines offer advice to clergy, their congregations, and the seminaries that train them, as they all reflect on the purpose and joy of touch.

Guidelines are simply guidelines, not rules. Clergy must be well-trained and informed, but also rely on the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, the insights of trusted colleagues, and the experience that builds over years of practical ministry experience. Being self-reflective, allowing others to teach and guide, keeping short accounts with God and close partners in the gospel should lead to a growth of healthy touch, and, it is to be hoped, a significant decline in unhealthy touch in the church.

When any form of touch is utilized by clergy, they should be aware of the nature of the touch: where they are touching, how long, frequency, and whether the touch was spontaneous or planned. And then, how has it been received— does body language imply that it was welcome or intrusive? And indeed, who are they touching? Being aware of the age, gender, the level of vulnerability of the individual, and any previous relationship between the clergy and the individual are all important to bear in mind. Clergy must also be quick to identify any feelings of attraction to the individual. The location of the

meeting is also important— are they alone? Are there others present? And, of course, why they are touching. There must always be deliberate and careful reasons for any touch.

## **Advice to Clergy**

### **Basic Overview**

#### **Be Self-aware**

The foremost guideline for touch that emerged from the research gathered is that clergy need to be self-aware as they approach using touch in their ministry. This, of course, is critical to all aspects of leadership and ministry and is not limited to the field of touch. Clergy who are not self-aware are likely to encounter difficulties in all aspects of their work. There are many helpful resources for increasing personal self-awareness. Michael Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffmann's excellent book *Preventing Ministry Failure: A ShepherdCare Guide for Pastors, Ministers and Other Caregivers* is a good one to start with.<sup>45</sup> *The Sacred Wilderness of Pastoral Ministry: Preparing a People for the Presence of the Lord* by David Rohrer provides helpful insights as to how to be a prophetic pastor, reminding clergy as to the weighty responsibility and privilege.<sup>46</sup> *The Reformed Pastor* by Richard Baxter speaks of the idea of moral disability, a warning to clergy to be very aware of their own places of weakness.<sup>47</sup> Baxter also emphasizes the need for clergy to be humbly attentive to their personal learning, devotion and constant self-awareness and

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<sup>45</sup> Michael Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure: A ShepherdCare Guide for Pastors, Ministers and Other Caregivers* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2007).

<sup>46</sup> David Rohrer, *The Sacred Wilderness of Pastoral Ministry: Preparing a People for the Presence of the Lord* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012).

<sup>47</sup> Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974).

self-appraisal spiritually. This is a theme John Stott also covers in a number of his books, most helpfully in *Problems of Christian Leadership*.<sup>48</sup> Clergy must lead by example, and nowhere more so than in the realm of personal spiritual discipline.

### **Reach out for Help**

Eugene Peterson speaks beautifully of the challenges and delight of pastoral ministry in many of his books, however of particular relevance is *The Contemplative Pastor: Returning to the Art of Spiritual Direction*.<sup>49</sup> He issues a strong reminder that clergy should take their own need for spiritual direction seriously as they seek to be accountable to God and their flocks. Peterson's *Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work* is also helpful in this regard.<sup>50</sup> Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie did some thorough research on steps pastors take to thrive in *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us about Surviving and Thriving*.<sup>51</sup> Early in this helpful book the authors quoted a pastor as saying, "most people in our church have a life that is like a stool with three legs. They've got their spiritual life, their professional life, and their family life. If one of those legs wobbles, they've got two others they can lean on. For us, these three legs can merge into one leg."<sup>52</sup> It is critical that clergy learn to balance all three legs on their stools. Sitting on a one-legged stool is not only uncomfortable, but dangerous.

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<sup>48</sup> John R. W. Stott, *Problems of Christian Leadership* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2014).

<sup>49</sup> Eugene H. Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor: Returning to the Art of Spiritual Direction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub, 1993).

<sup>50</sup> Eugene H. Peterson, *Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1992).

<sup>51</sup> Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us about Surviving and Thriving* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2013).

<sup>52</sup> Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry*, 15.

## Learn about Touch

The overwhelming conclusion of the questionnaire results and the interviews (where people self-selected and therefore were likely already more bought-in to ideas about touch) was that the clergy were simply either not cognizant of the benefits of touch, or had been somewhat scared off from touching parishioners by either their seminary education, the broader culture, or their own lack of healing in this area. The fear of touch so often emerges from a lack of personal understanding or an awareness of the healthy role that touch can play in a person's journey to wholeness. It would be instructive for clergy to read some of the literature that abounds on touch. Notably, *Touch* by Tiffany Field, *Touch: The Science of Hand, Heart, and Mind* by David Linden, and *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* by Bessel A. Van der Kolk would give an excellent foundational background to understanding the scientific perspective.<sup>53</sup> Ashley Montagu's *Touching: The Human Significance of the Skin* is also a very helpful introduction.<sup>54</sup>

Guidelines for how touch should be used by clergy in their sacramental, prayer, and pastoral ministries will now be explored in specific areas of ministry.

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<sup>53</sup> Tiffany Field, *Touch* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001); David J. Linden, *Touch: The Science of Hand, Heart, and Mind* (New York: Penguin Books, 2016); Bessel A. Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (New York: Viking, 2014).

<sup>54</sup> Ashley Montagu, *Touching : The Human Significance of the Skin* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986).

## Specific Areas of Ministry

### **Touch in Sacramental Ministry**

When entering worship, clergy should do so with confidence and delight that as a member of the clergy they have been ordained and vested with authority by their Bishop to stand in the place of Christ. As they administer the sacraments, as they engage in services for marriage and funerals, as they celebrate and guide, they should be supremely grateful that they are able to convey a touch of divine love to those they encounter in the service. However, they must also be aware that even as people come for communion or to be blessed, not all do so from a place of health. Within a liturgical setting most touch is either procedural, instrumental, or functional.

It is particularly important to be careful when touching children, or adults with specialized needs. Within a service, the most likely point of encounter between clergy and children is at communion, should they be brought forward for a blessing by their parents. Clergy should be very aware of the responses of children to the act of blessing. If the child doesn't want to be blessed, a touch of blessing should never be forced, an alternative is simply to smile at them, silently pray for them, and move on. Clergy must not impose a physical blessing on anyone who seems disinclined, whatever their age or cognitive ability.

### **Touch in Prayer Ministry**

Often prayer ministry occurs in public and ideally when two prayer ministers are praying for an individual. The guidelines for touch in such circumstances include the following.

When someone comes for prayer ministry, it is good practice after the initial introductions to ask for permission to touch the person if this is likely to be appropriate. Prayer ministers should be careful always to ask before reaching out to touch. In addition, be specific: “May I touch your shoulder/hand/arm.” Normally, touch should be restricted to these three areas.

When touching someone in prayer, care should be taken to keep one’s hands still, as patting, rubbing, and other motions are deeply distracting and often done more to soothe than to offer prayer support. As prayer ministers, the challenge is to help someone to be open to God, not to draw attention to oneself.

In prayer ministry, if someone is asking for prayer to relinquish the hold something has on their life, it can be helpful to ask them to place a symbolic object in their hands, and then for clergy to place their hands underneath, supporting their desire to hand control over to God as they pray. E.g. if the issue is money, holding their purse up to the Lord, as an indication that they want him to have authority over their finances.

At times, someone who comes for prayer will cry. The prayer minister should remember that tears may indicate that God is working, so they should not distract the individual with comfort, unless absolutely necessary. It is so important that clergy watch closely, praying with open eyes, in order to judge when, and if, touch should be used. Offering a Kleenex at a suitable pause, and a light touch on the shoulder at that point, may be appropriate. Hugging a person when they cry is a natural, human response but might be too intimate for the moment and could distract from the work the Holy Spirit is doing.

Anointing oil can be applied to a forehead or to open hands, again after asking permission. Anointing a forehead with oil is a helpful tool in prayer ministry. It can be

administered during prayer for healing or deliverance. It is always a communication of blessing, and a reminder that God is with them. The lingering aroma, if a scented oil is used, can be a helpful reminder to the individual that God is at work. However, with the rise in allergies the person should always be asked if a scented oil is permissible. The last thing they need is an allergic response.

There are other moments when anointing with oil can be a helpful tool. One clergy person spoke of the way their Rector prays, before the service, for each person who will participate in the service that day, anointing them individually and praying that the Holy Spirit would strengthen them in their leading, praying, reading, ushering, or greeting role. Similarly, anointing hands with oil can be done for the work that lies ahead, or in other symbolic situations.

At the end of prayer ministry, as in pastoral consultations, a handshake or side hug can be helpful. These express that despite whatever has been said in the ministry setting, you are still “for” them: “You were not too much for me. I am still here. I am staying with you in this,” is a powerful statement if someone has shared things that are shameful or hard in their lives.

### **Touch in Pastoral Ministry**

Many pastoral meetings take place in private or in an office situation. It is highly desirable that any space used for a pastoral meeting should be visible from the outside. The easiest way for this to be accomplished is to have a window, or a glass window in a door, or to keep the door ajar. A window helps in that it does not compromise confidentiality of the words spoken, but it does give visual accountability for touch. However, a door left ajar speaks to the desire for above-board integrity. Seat the person



in the chair nearest the door so that they instinctively know they can leave if they want to. Clergy should not place themselves between a parishioner and the exit path. Clergy should also pay attention to their body language in pastoral ministry. They should sit with care – legs together, they should not lean forward with their legs apart; they should not inch forward. All of these are simply good manners, but also should be taken seriously as most people pick up quickly on body language, and so clergy should do all they can to minimize discomfort and avoid giving mixed messages through their posture, even before they take the risk of including touch in a ministry setting.<sup>55</sup>

When meeting in a private space with a parishioner, clergy should be aware of a number of important factors when considering whether or not touch is appropriate. The first question is why is a touch even being considered? Above normal social greetings, touch should be used as a thoughtful response to or in a situation. Is the person grieving? Unwell? Scared? Any response to an emotional signal should be measured and appropriate.

Often clergy do not know the full story of the person they are meeting with, but before initiating or responding to touch they should remember the individuality of the person concerned. Elements to consider include: age, gender, sexual orientation, their story (as far as it is known: does it include abuse, neglect, mental health struggles?), personality, culture, and their immediate demeanor. If they are angry, for example, it's probably best not to touch them!

Touch needs to be given out of a place of relationship. Clergy should consider whether they have earned the right to touch someone. As one interviewee said,

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<sup>55</sup> Personal interview with Candidate H, December 6, 2018 had spent some time as a chaplain and had some excellent advice about physical posture.

“Relationship always precedes ministry. You should never be touching someone if you haven’t built up some relational capital. You have to earn the ‘right to touch.’”<sup>56</sup> Clergy must be self-aware enough to know whether or not they are equipped in any specific situation to pray or counsel others. It is too easy to exacerbate a wound. It is always acceptable to find others to counsel, pray with, or minister to someone in distress if their story is somehow triggering to the clergy’s own story. And indeed, there are many, many situations where a clergy person may not have the experience or knowledge to care well for the person before them. Having a good list of people to refer to is an essential clergy tool.

Some people who come for pastoral meetings may have obvious physical, mental, or psychological needs. If a parishioner has intellectual or communication limitations or disabilities, then it can be helpful for someone who knows the person well to assist in interpreting their wishes. Clergy should first attempt to communicate directly with the person who has come for prayer. If communication proves too difficult, they should ask the individual if they have a trusted friend or caregiver who could be with them. Clergy must take care to learn all they can about the individual’s personal situation before touching in a way which may prove harmful.

If a parishioner has physical limitations, then they may require more functional touch to take part in a pastoral conversation. Such touch should always be offered with respect and care to maintain the dignity of the individual. Parishioners who have difficulties with movement or speech could also be encouraged to bring a safe friend with them, who can assist in easing communication.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Personal interview with Candidate E, December 5, 2018.

<sup>57</sup> Clergy must be careful when praying for healing with people who have what they may regard as “disabilities”. Some challenges which people face are bound up in their DNA and the question of healing is

Often, however, a person's needs are less obvious. For example, understanding a person's personal trauma will only emerge after extended conversation. Although it may be hard to discern why they initially appear "touch avoidant", taking time to listen to their story may well reveal the reasons. Once a clergy person has touched a parishioner, that touch gets "attached to the relationship" and, as an act in time, becomes a part of that person's story.<sup>58</sup> This is a further reminder that touch needs to be used with deliberate care.

As clergy touch parishioners, it is to be remembered that the interpretation which is given to that touch by the parishioner may not be the same as the motive of the clergy in giving it. Within pastoral ministry there is often the danger of transference. As one interview candidate explained it, "Everybody wants to make us into somebody (their mother, their father, their friend): the question for clergy is, when do you let it play out and when do you resist? You are not their mother, but you can at times step into the role for a healing moment. But it's really hard when you get stuck in the role."<sup>59</sup> Paying close attention to the roles clergy are playing at any moment is critical. This is also a reminder that referring a parishioner for more specialized counselling is always an option open to clergy.

Touching children should only be done in line with the Diocesan or ACNA child-safety policies.<sup>60</sup> Side-hugs and high-fives are generally acceptable, but other touch should be avoided. Certainly, children should never be invited to sit on the lap of a clergy

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complex. Do not assume that just because people look like they have a specific problem that that is what they want prayer for. Allow the supplicant time to articulate their perceived need and pray for that. Praying for healing is not always appropriate or desired.

<sup>58</sup> Personal interview with Candidate E, December 5, 2018.

<sup>59</sup> Personal interview with Candidate G, December 6, 2018.

<sup>60</sup> "Protection of Children," Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic: Anglican Church in North America, accessed December 20, 2018, <http://www.anglicandoma.org/pocpolicy>.

person, or to be seen in private by them. Clergy must keep above reproach in every possible way. Inviting a parent, teacher, or trusted adult to be with you as you speak with a child is a helpful way to proceed.

Counseling children should only be done by those who thoroughly understand child development. The way children understand the world is so radically different from adult clergy, unless they know the child exceedingly well, it is all too possible to speak in a way which is unhelpful to the child. It is better to err on the side of caution. This is also true for counseling any person who is physically or mentally disabled, or developmentally delayed. Not that a clergy person can never counsel or touch someone who is “different” in some way from them; however, all difference can lead to potential misunderstanding whether of culture, age, or gender and so particular attention needs to be paid to messages conveyed by either word or touch.

Clergy must be so careful to watch out for any kind of “savior mentality” or “tough guy” approach which says their ordination is enough to equip them to deal with any situation. There are plenty of people they can ask for help! It is good practice to ask the permission of a parishioner with more complex needs if one or more of their other caregivers can be involved as you pray for them. These people can help to interpret needs and behaviors. In addition, if a parishioner is struggling with a psychosis, clergy should consider involving their psychiatrist or counselor. This can be done by phone but having face-to-face meetings will greatly improve communication. In more complicated cases, clergy may simply refer to a professional, but it is also possible to ask a parishioner for permission to contact the counselor or medical team in order to help them with both medical and spiritual care in a coordinated fashion.

Clergy should never exceed the other person's level of comfort with touch. A useful way to ensure this is not to make the first move, but to wait for the other person to initiate the greeting. If a hand is proffered for a handshake, then shake it back. However, if a hug or a touch on the shoulder seems appropriate, then ask first. A helpful guideline is never to use any touch beyond a hand-shake or side-hug without permission. If the other person does not initiate touch, then clergy should not offer any, especially without verbal consent. Clearly, common-sense and a prompting of the Holy Spirit may overrule that. However, it is reasonable for clergy to follow, and not lead, when it comes to touch in pastoral situations. If clergy feel during a pastoral one-on-one meeting that further prayer ministry – including the laying on of hands – is warranted, they can also delay, offering to pray further the next Sunday or later in the week with another prayer minister. Most ministry is not time-sensitive. Taking time to pray in a more appropriate setting, or with another present, is respectful and can give time for personal reflection and preparation.

Touching faces should only be done with care. Generally, anointing foreheads is acceptable, as is “ashing” a forehead on Ash Wednesday. Clergy should always ask if a person would like to be anointed. Touching cheeks should be avoided, as this can express a level of tenderness which is generally inappropriate for clergy. An exception might be when someone needs a strongly maternal touch. This could be a young person, but equally it could be an elderly person who is looking for comfort as they face loneliness in their declining years.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Interview candidate F spoke of her years as a chaplain to the elderly and how sometimes having their cheeks stroked was deeply comforting to elderly ladies. However, her relationship with these ladies had built up over time and this is definitely a rare exception to the guideline not to touch faces.

The relationship between the clergy and the parishioner will play into any decision as to whether touch is appropriate. Factors could include the longevity and quality of their relationship, and the nature of their history.

If touch is misused, clergy must be quick to apologize and to ask for forgiveness. It can be helpful to take a step back from close proximity immediately as the apology is given, using your body language to reinforce the words spoken. It is unfortunate when boundaries are crossed, but sometimes even with good intent, there may be more to a story than is initially apparent, making what might be considered even “normal” touch – such as a handshake – unwelcome or triggering.

It is perfectly permissible, and indeed desirable, for clergy also to exercise their own right not to be touched. If a clergy person does not like being touched, it is perfectly appropriate for them to say so, and to ask that they are not touched. This can be a helpful step in their own journey to wholeness.

## **Staying Healthy**

Clergy also have their own stories. Their humanity is part of their story and also part of their calling. God works with the humanity of every person, weaving wholeness out of brokenness, redeeming and restoring.

Most of the time, most clergy will touch with deliberate care. As with all the caring professions, they must also, however, take regular inventory of their personal lives to ensure that their own needs for touch are being met in appropriate and loving circumstances.

There are many ways of defining what constitutes human needs. One helpful categorization was devised by Abraham Maslow.<sup>62</sup> His hierarchy of needs itemizes five types of need, often represented in a pyramid. At the most basic level, humans need to meet their physiological needs, water and food, rest and warmth. The second need is for security and safety. Thirdly, comes a need for love and belonging: this includes friendship and community. The fourth need Maslow defines as a need for esteem and respect, and a sense of accomplishment. And finally, the need for self-actualization, fulfilling one's potential.

Clergy, like everyone else, have these needs. The danger for clergy is that, as they seek to minister to others, they will seek to have their needs met inappropriately by their parishioners. At times, of course, some of their needs can, and should, be met by their congregation. For example, they will, hopefully, be paid for their role as clergy and hence the first two needs of physiological and security needs should appropriately be met. The more challenging area is in the emotional and psychological needs.

Pastorally, there are increased risks and benefits in clergy touch. As representatives of Christ, clergy have elevated responsibility, and, therefore, the capacity to do even greater harm than other lay leaders in the church should they transgress the boundaries of appropriate touch. Safeguards of personal accountability with a mentor, spiritual director, or peer-counselor are invaluable. The benefits of utilizing an opportunity to speak with truth into a fellow-clergy's life can also not be underestimated. At times, it can be hard to be ruthlessly honest about one's own need for affection and

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<sup>62</sup> Abraham H Maslow, *Theory of Human Motivation* (Place of publication not identified: Wilder Publications, 2018).

touch. It is to be hoped that all clergy will have sufficient people around them who can be alert and available to challenge and offer support.

Clergy will have personal friends both outside and within their congregation who will contribute to meeting their level three needs. Cultivating some close friendships outside of their church community is to be encouraged. However, the danger lies when clergy seek to have their needs for love and affection met by those who are coming to them in their most vulnerable moments for counsel and prayer. When a clergy person reaches out in touch to a hurting parishioner there is potential for deep intimacy, and this is not the outcome which is desired in ministry. Clergy stand as ministers of God's truth and do offer connection, but they must remember they are connecting people to God, not to themselves. They must also be so careful not to interpose their own need for touch. Their touch needs must be met by their intimate friends, their spouse if they have one, and their family.

Maslow's fourth level of need, that of esteem and respect, can also be one where clergy can fail to respond appropriately to their parishioners. The potential for exploitation of power and control is always present. Sadly, this is a place where some clergy have fallen prey to their weakness, exercising their charm to beguile, their power to silence, and their touch to exploit. Clergy are called to love and serve their congregation as Christ loves the church. This posture is not one of power but humility. Respect is earned, not demanded, in a healthy relationship.

In order to give healthy touch, it is vital that clergy stay emotionally healthy and self-aware. It is not enough to think that one is "too old," "too wise," "too experienced." Story after story emerges of clergy who have simply not paid attention to their own story. Knowing oneself, being self-aware, keeping accountability partners, are not optional



behaviors but critical to clergy health. As one interviewee noted, “In order to love others, you have to love yourself; in order to love yourself, you have to know yourself.”<sup>63</sup> It is important for clergy to be in tune with their own emotions and to know their points of vulnerability. The DOMA “Guard your Hearts” material will be a helpful resource when it is released in 2019.<sup>64</sup> There are other useful ways of getting to know your own story, whether by attending a course such as Dan Allender’s “A story to be told” workshop or by seeking counseling or therapy.<sup>65</sup>

Clergy need to be self-aware, and also take seriously the risks of transgression. When clergy misuse touch they stand to lose not only their job, but also their family, the respect of their community, potentially their housing, and a deep challenge to their faith. They also stand to destroy their Christian community, or at best rock it to its foundations, damaging the faith of others. Temptation is all around, and given the vulnerability of many parishioners, the gateway to opportunities to fail is wide.

Staying healthy for clergy means being self-aware, reading and learning, ensuring they have people praying for them, maintaining accountability with peers or their Bishop, getting counseling from an external person as needed, and ensuring that their basic needs of food, sleep, and exercise are appropriately met. Their need for touch should only be met by trusted friends, and not by those to whom they minister. Clergy should maintain a humble openness with their most trusted leaders in their churches. Anglican churches

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<sup>63</sup> Personal interview with Candidate E, December 5, 2018.

<sup>64</sup> This material is currently in Beta stage but will help clergy to identify points of weakness in their stories.

<sup>65</sup> “To be Told,” The Allender Center at The Seattle School, accessed December 23, 2018, <https://theallendercenter.org/offerings/conferences/to-be-told/>.

either have a vestry or some form of leadership council and, normally, two wardens.<sup>66</sup> Keeping a close and vulnerable openness with the wardens is to be encouraged.<sup>67</sup>

### Advice to Churches

In the life of any church community, clergy will come and go. The church has significant longer-term responsibility to ensure a healthy DNA in the spiritual life of the congregation. These range from the practical to the theoretical.

### Policies

Every church should have a child-safety policy which includes regular training for all staff and those who work with children.<sup>68</sup> This is a Diocesan requirement for Anglican churches. In addition, a staff handbook should include guidelines for safe touch for all members of the congregation as well as staff. Karen McClintock's helpful book, *Preventing Sexual Abuse in Congregations: A Resource for Leaders*, includes a helpful section with four policies she feels every church should have: an *ethics policy*, a *sexual misconduct policy for clergy*, a *sexual harassment policy*, and one which contains outlines for *abuse-reporting procedures*.<sup>69</sup> Although written from a Methodist

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<sup>66</sup> The Anglican Diocese of Edmonton has a nice description of the role of a Church Warden: "Wardens' Handbook," Anglican Diocese of Edmonton, accessed December 23, 2018, [http://justus.anglican.org/~edmondto/resources/wardens/what\\_is.htm](http://justus.anglican.org/~edmondto/resources/wardens/what_is.htm). Note in their tradition the senior Pastor, or Rector, is called the Incumbent.

<sup>67</sup> Personal interview with Candidate G, December 6, 2018 spoke warmly of the help and support given by their wardens in times of crisis.

<sup>68</sup> The ACNA child safety policy can be found online: "Protection of Children," Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic: Anglican Church in North America, accessed December 20, 2018, <http://www.anglicandoma.org/pocpolicy>.

<sup>69</sup> Karen A. McClintock, *Preventing Sexual Abuse in Congregations: A Resource for Leaders* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2004), chapters 9 and 10.

perspective, all the advice contained in her policies would readily apply in an Anglican setting. Other examples of anti-harassment policies are widely available online, including a number written by Anglican Dioceses in Canada.<sup>70</sup>

Teaching about positive touch can take place in many areas of church life. Having all volunteers undertake a basic training, raising their awareness both of the many reasons why people might not want to be touched, and the signals they may give off to support that wish, and also highlighting the many positive and life-giving ways healthy touch can be used. Volunteers should be encouraged to shake the hands of all who come to a service or event, but they should always be encouraged to make eye contact first.

### Caring for Clergy

Churches have a responsibility to care well for their clergy and should make sure that they are doing all they can to care appropriately for their needs. The wardens should take their responsibility seriously, not only to support their clergy with administrative and practical tasks, but to ensure that their bodies, minds, and souls are well shepherded through checking in regularly on their physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Clergy should be asked about their personal habits and disciplines, with an encouragement to take regular Sabbath days, to seek out counseling if needed, and to be very aware of any early signs of burnout or undue stress.

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<sup>70</sup> Having a harassment policy in place is a reasonably new development for most churches. Examples abound, but numerous different approaches can be found. Note the version produced by the Anglican Diocese of Saskatoon, accessed December 23, 2018, <http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/568407/24082553/1387400042200/Re.+17-Sexual+Harrassment.pdf?token=ZVdfbiYXqNKo1jrjPuO9qxwOJjQ%3D>; or the version of the Anglican Diocese of Ontario, accessed December 23, 2018, <http://ontario.anglican.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Anti-Harassment-Policy-Version-1.0-Approved.pdf>.

## **Advice to Seminaries**

The role seminaries play in preparing people for ministry is huge. Seminaries need to remember that they are not simply educating minds, but also bodies and spirits. This attention to the whole self will result in more rounded clergy. Clergy should be taught the amazing and wonderful benefits of touch, as well as the real dangers of inappropriate touch leading to psychological and emotional dis-ease. Seminaries have an opportunity to make a significant impact on reducing clergy misconduct as well as encouraging the flourishing of many through encouraging and teaching the healthy use of appropriate touch.

There are many areas of the curriculum which can expand to include a full theology and praxis of touch. A few suggestions as to how these could be included follow.

## **Pastoral Theology**

Christians have much to learn from the scientific community, even as those in the scientific community have much to learn from people of faith. As Chapter 3 demonstrated, the psychology of the body is deeply intertwined with its capacity for healing. The body, mind, and spirit cannot be ministered to independently but must be viewed as interdependent and all requiring the touch of Christ for growing into wholeness. Some of this touch comes through the mysterious and wonderful work of the Holy Spirit, speaking directly into bodies, minds, hearts, and souls. However, some of it can be conveyed by the “touch of Christ” ministered to a person by a member of the clergy. Often this touch comes in the midst of a liturgical moment: whether in the touch of an overt and deliberate blessing, the giving of the Eucharistic elements, the pouring of

the water of Baptism, the binding of hands in marriage, or the commendation of the body at a funeral. Liturgical and sacramental touch provide many moments of holy connection and these will be explored further below.

The most common places of touch between clergy and parishioner arise in prayer ministry and in friendly greetings in the narthex after a service. On any Sunday, these are the spaces where touch is most likely to occur; however, the place where greatest care should be exercised is in the sanctity of one-on-one pastoral conversation and prayer.

The most vulnerable places are in pastoral ministry where a parishioner has often come for a consultation or prayer because of a moment of crisis in their lives, or a desire to deal with a history of brokenness. So many parishioners come to clergy when they have experienced significant trauma, and it would be very helpful for clergy to be aware of at least the basics of the psychology of trauma. As noted in Chapter 3, this is the place where both the client and the clergy person are at their most vulnerable emotionally and physically and so additional care should be taken to establish clear boundaries in these settings.

### Liturgics

The normal pattern of a liturgics class could easily incorporate specific guidance as to the theological implications of touch in the liturgy. A review of the sacraments and the moments when clergy stand in the place of Christ and administer Holy Communion or baptize babies or believers should include specific mention of every moment of touch.

Ministry for clergy begins formally after the moment of ordination. It is significant that the ordination prayer is spoken as the Bishop lays hands on the ordinand's

head. That moment of touch is deeply significant as the clergy person is appointed to serve as Christ's minister to a hurting world.

*Then the Bishop shall lay his hands upon the head of every one to be made Deacon, each one humbly kneeling before him, and he shall say*

Receive the Holy Spirit for the Office and Work of a Deacon in the Church of God, now committed to you by the Imposition of Hands; in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

In your great goodness, O Lord, make *this* your *servant* a Deacon in your Church; give *him* grace to be modest, humble, and constant in *his* ministry; give *him* a ready will to observe all spiritual discipline; and with the testimony of a good conscience always before *him*, may *he* continue stable and strong in the service of your Son Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and honor, world without end.<sup>71</sup>

In Baptism, the significance of the clergy touch on the water, where the Holy Spirit is invited to bless, should be emphasized.

*Here the Celebrant touches the water and says*

Now, Father, sanctify this water by the power of your Holy Spirit. May all who are baptized here be cleansed from sin, be born again, and continue for ever in the risen life of Jesus Christ our Savior. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*<sup>72</sup>

When the chrism is used for the exorcism of evil, a robust view of spiritual warfare should be taught, to emphasize that this is no mere lip-service to the reality of the forces of darkness but a clear moment of deep significance. *"The Celebrant shall pray over the Candidate(s) and may anoint each candidate with the Oil of Exorcism, saying Almighty God deliver you from the powers of darkness and evil, and lead you into the light and*

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<sup>71</sup> The ordinal can be found online at "Texts for Common Prayer," Anglican Church in North America, accessed December 23, 2018, [http://anglicanchurch.net/?/main/texts\\_for\\_common\\_prayer](http://anglicanchurch.net/?/main/texts_for_common_prayer).

<sup>72</sup> "Texts for Common Prayer."

obedience of the kingdom of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*”<sup>73</sup> The touch when pouring water over the person reminds them of their identification with Christ in his Baptism, and as in the sacrament of Holy Communion the power of that moment is, in Anglican theology, redolent with the real presence of Christ.

At Holy Communion, there are two key moments of touch: the first is when the presbyter invokes the epiclesis, touching the bread and wine and asking the Holy Spirit to be present. The second, is when the bread and wine are given to the communicant: this too is a powerful moment with deep spiritual significance as they engage with the real presence of the risen Christ. For those who do not receive the elements, there is a moment of touch in the blessing. The clergy person stands in the place of Christ as they make the sign of the cross on the person’s forehead, asking for Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to bring their blessing. This is always a powerful moment, as the presbyter stands aside for God to touch and speak, but never more so when in the midst of the serving of the bread and wine.

In marriage, binding the hands at the moment of the blessing is a powerfully symbolic moment of touch. The stole wraps the bride and groom’s hands together with an invocation of the Holy Spirit, “Now that N. and N. have given themselves to each other by solemn vows, with the joining of hands and the giving and receiving of a ring, I pronounce that they are husband and wife, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder.”<sup>74</sup>

At a funeral service, an Anglican tradition has the priests gathered around the casket or cremains and placing their hands on it to commit the person to God, saying

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<sup>73</sup> “Texts for Common Prayer.”

<sup>74</sup> “Texts for Common Prayer.”

“Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant *N*. Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive *him* into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light. *Amen.*”<sup>75</sup> This is a powerful moment for those who are grieving. This offers a visual and sacred moment of closure as clergy publicly offer the individual into the receiving hands of God, transferring them from earthly touch to divine.

### Other Classes

In Church History it would be instructive to chart the history of touch in spiritual practice not only in the Anglican tradition, but also across denominational, geographical and even faith lines.

This could be developed in a class on Missiology, where it would be instructive to look at cultural differences in touch. Western assumptions are not global. For example, touching a head in Thailand would be deemed most disrespectful. How should the church respond when seeking to ordain? Or bless? Or anoint?

In Systematic Theology, one could use the focus of touch to examine the scriptures, looking at its impact in every realm of Anglican theology and praxis. A small example of this was given in Chapter 1, where an abbreviated systematic theology was offered through the lens of touch.

Many seminaries have a class, or two, on the practical nature of ministry. The previous advice to clergy could be included.

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<sup>75</sup> “Texts for Common Prayer.”



Preaching tends not to involve touch, but it is definitely a physical activity, and so it might be instructive to ask preachers to consider the role their bodies play in preaching, which might extend to their sensitivity to the use of touch – maybe even if simply including teaching on the benefits of healthy touch in ministry. Some sermons might lend themselves more readily to the use of touch. Some preachers leave the podium and preach from amongst the people. This could be encouraged from time to time as a means of engaging people in a fresh way with the Word. For example, a first-person sermon from the perspective of a leper healed by Jesus could lead to the preacher touching a congregant either before or after healing.<sup>76</sup> Almost any sermon on a healing narrative could contain some form of touch, and the examples given in Chapter 2 could be a good starting point. Stories from the Old Testament which center around a moment of touch could also be explored in this way (see Chapter 1 for many examples), but the story of Uzzah touching the ark being just one.<sup>77</sup>

### **Moving Forward: For Future Research**

The topic of touch is ripe to be explored more fully. Pastorally, it could be considered though as to whether the refusal or rejection of healthy, intentional touch could also be a point of growth for parishioners. This is a high-risk suggestion: but it would certainly help them identify an area where inner healing was still required.

It would also be interesting to discover whether clergy, who personally most value touch, are those quickest to offer touch to parishioners. Potentially, this could lead to a discussion as to which clergy are at the highest risk for misuse of touch.

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<sup>76</sup> Mark 1:40-42.

<sup>77</sup> 2 Samuel 6:4-7.

Our society is so hyper-sexualized that helping students to be aware of other ways of experiencing pleasure, for example, through developing sensory awareness could be helpful. In addition, making sure that male and female clergy are very aware of how men and women perceive touch differently would be important.<sup>78</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The role of touch in supporting health and well-being for all people is undisputedly helpful. As seminaries prepare men and women for ministry, they have a critical role in ensuring solid foundations of knowledge and teaching good practice which could play a critical part in helping clergy to avoid the pitfalls of bad touch, whilst promoting and developing the beauties of good touch.

Churches must be attentive to the needs of their clergy as they provide wholesome community within which people can find their place as they worship a God who loves them so much that he became incarnate. Vestries and wardens can be attentive to ensuring the well-being of their clergy, supporting them as they not only lead their community but seek greater wholeness themselves.

Clergy have a unique role to play as they stand in spiritual authority, as Christ's under-shepherds in a complicated and hurting world. It is to be hoped that with a greater awareness of the benefits of healthy touch, a stronger sense of the deep spiritual meaning which touch has, and a confidence in the incarnation of Jesus, that clergy will treat touch not only with greater reverence, but also with humility as they reach out to a hurting

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<sup>78</sup> This is a big topic, and there is much literature around it. One introductory article can be found here: Jason Marsh, "Gender and Touch: When it comes to touch, do men and women speak the same language?", October 18, 2010, accessed December 23, 2018, [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/gender\\_and\\_touch](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/gender_and_touch). The books indicated at the start of this chapter on the science of touch also contain ideas about the role gender has in touch perception.

world. Clergy are encouraged not to be scared, but to be personally self-aware and to delight in the opportunities they have before them to use touch in life-enhancing, joy-filled, expectant ministry as we wait for the culmination of all things and the day when all touch will be redeemed. We will hear Jesus say, “‘Surely I am coming soon.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!”<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Revelation 22:20.

## APPENDIX A A SURVEY ON TOUCH

For my DMin thesis project I am investigating the role that touch plays in pastoral and sacramental ministry for Anglican clergy. I would welcome your input about your experience of touch: whether positive/helpful or negative/harmful. All responses will be treated with confidence. The data will form the basis for my research, with all identifying features removed and pseudonyms used to ensure confidentiality. By participating in this survey, you consent to your data being used.

Pastoral ministry encompasses the engagements which, as clergy, we have with our congregation informally e.g. after services, or when praying with people and in pastoral care meetings. Sacramental ministry includes all moments of touch involved with baptism, marriage, communion etc.

Following this data collection, I will be interviewing a sub-section of respondents to collect further data as well. There will be an opportunity to sign up for this in the survey, if you are interested.

This survey should take approx. 15 minutes to complete.

If you have any questions please contact me at [liz@incarnationanglican.org](mailto:liz@incarnationanglican.org)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. This survey is completely anonymous - unless you choose to share your email with me.

### **Your seminary training**

1. Did your seminary training (MDiv or other) include any training on sacramental touch? (*yes, no, other*)

2. Please describe any training briefly
3. Did your seminary training (MDiv or other) include any training on pastoral touch? *(yes, no, other)*
4. Please describe any training briefly

### **Your current Church Setting: policies**

If you would be willing to share any of these policies with me, I'd be delighted!

Please send them to [liz@incarnationanglican.org](mailto:liz@incarnationanglican.org) if you have a moment!

5. Does your current church have a child- safety policy? *(yes, no, in process of being written or agreed, other)*
6. Does your current church have a sexual harassment policy? *(yes, no, in process of being written or agreed, other)*
7. Does your current church have a touch policy for greeters/ushers/other Sunday lay volunteers? *(yes, no, in process of being written or agreed, other)*
8. Does your current church have a procedure in place for what to do if complaints are made about unhealthy touch in a pastoral or other situation? *(yes, no, in process of being written or agreed, other)*
9. Does your church have any other policies or material pertinent to this topic? e.g. in staff handbook or other. *(yes, no, other)*

### **Sacramental Touch**

10. How conscious are you (as a member of the clergy) of the way you use touch during the course of a service? *(1-5, 1= very conscious, 5= not at all conscious)*
11. Comment

How important is touch in the following sacramental moments for you? Does the touch seem appropriate? Meaningful? Or distracting?

12. Baptism (*1-5, 1 = unimportant, 5 = essential*)

13. Eucharist (*1-5, 1 = unimportant, 5 = essential*)

14. Weddings (*1-5, 1 = unimportant, 5 = essential*)

15. Funerals (*1-5, 1 = unimportant, 5 = essential*)

16. Passing the Peace (*1-5, 1 = unimportant, 5 = essential*)

17. What brings you greatest joy in these moments of touch?

**How important is touch for you when praying for others?**

18. Anointing with oil (*1-5, 1 = unimportant, 5 = essential*)

19. Healing Prayer (*1-5, 1 = unimportant, 5 = essential*)

20. Prayer for comfort for the afflicted (*1-5, 1 = unimportant, 5 = essential*)

21. What brings you greatest joy in these moments of touch?

22. Please respond to this statement: In my church, clergy use touch deliberately in prayer ministry (*1-6, 1 = In my church, clergy use touch in prayer ministry, 6= In my church, clergy do not use touch in prayer ministry*)

23. Do you have a policy for the use of touch in prayer ministry? (If you do and would be willing to share please send to [liz@incarnationanglican.org](mailto:liz@incarnationanglican.org)) (*yes, no, other*)

24. Comment

## **Pastoral Touch**

How important is touch in the following pastoral moments for you? Do you use touch deliberately?

25. Greeting parishioners as they enter the service (*1-5, 1 = unimportant, 5 = essential*)

26. Greeting parishioners as they leave the service (*1-5, 1 = unimportant, 5 = essential*)

27. In my church, clergy use touch in pastoral ministry (*1-6, 1 = In my church, clergy use touch in pastoral ministry, 6 = In my church, clergy do not use touch in pastoral ministry*)

28. Comment

29. What brings you greatest joy in these moments of touch?

30. Do you have a policy for the use of touch in pastoral ministry? (*yes, no, other*)

31. Consider a recent pastoral meeting when you deliberately used touch and it was responded to negatively. What was the nature of the touch (a hand on a shoulder, a hug etc)? Did you ask for their consent to touch? Why did you choose to touch them? Did you follow-up with the individual whom you touched? How did it make you feel?

32. Consider a recent pastoral meeting when you deliberately used touch and it was responded to positively. What was the nature of the touch (a hand on a shoulder, a hug etc)? Did you ask for their consent to touch? Why did you choose to touch them? Did you follow-up with the individual whom you touched? How did it make you feel?

## **Personal view of touch**

An exploration around the extent to which you are aware of touch in your daily life

33. Do you notice touch in your daily life? (*1-5, 1 = I notice it a lot, 5 = I do not notice*)

it)

34. How do you find the experience of casual touch? e.g. a hand on a shoulder during a conversation (1-5, 1 = Hate it, 5 = love it)

35. At the end of the day, are you aware if you have been touched during the course of the day? (yes, sometimes, no)

36. Do you generally consider touch as "unsafe" or "safe?" (1-5, 1 = Unsafe, 5 = safe)

37. Which of the following words do you immediately associate with touch? (select all that apply) Check all that apply. (Warm, Claustrophobic, Loving, Frightening, Hurtful, Unsettling, Calming, Uncomfortable, Awkward, Grounding, Reassuring, Other:)

One of the "5 Love Languages" is physical touch. If you are not sure of your love language please complete the online questionnaire now.

<http://www.5lovelanguages.com/profile/>

38. How does physical touch rank, as a love language, for you? Mark only one oval. (1st (highest score) - 5th, don't know)

### **Vocation and Demographics**

39. Clergy or laity (Vocational Deacon, Transitional Deacon, Ordained Priest, Laity, Other:)

40. Current Employment (FT employed by a church, PT employed by a church, non-stipendiary working with a church, not currently employed as clergy, Other:)

41. Gender (male, female)

42. Marital status (optional) (married, single, divorced/ separated, widow/widower, Other:)

43. Age (optional) (<35, 35- -50, 50--65, >65)



Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. If you would be willing to discuss any of these issues further, please complete this optional section.

44. Name:

45. Email:

46. Phone Number

47. Following this data collection, I will be interviewing to further the discussion.

Would you be interested in participating in the interview process? *(Yes, No)*

48. Would you like more information on any area of touch in your context? Please be specific.

49. Would you be interested in a training on how to use touch well in a ministry context?  
*(Yes, No, Maybe)*

## APPENDIX B A SURVEY ON TOUCH (RESULTS)

### **Your seminary training**

**1. Did your seminary training (MDiv or other) include any training on sacramental touch? (*yes, no, other*)**

Yes	8
No	57
Other	5

**2. Please describe any training briefly**

BS in Bible at CIU. MA in Theology from CIU. Diploma in Christian Ministry from Trinity School for Ministry.

The usual training in safety issues in clergy/lay encounters.

None.

Talked about this in classes on healing and pastoral care, as well as in CPE

My training in this area is more connected to Inner Healing prayer work rather than Seminary.

hands on training for eucharist, confession, marriage

As a curate at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church in the Fall of 1972 conducting a healing service.

Minimal in relation to baptism

The training I received in "sacramental touch" was in my training as a professional nurse; a practice I have used consistently in various areas of clinical and ecclesiastical settings.

Training and practice in all aspects of secular bereavement care involves what I would call sacramental touch as well. I'm always aware of the setting and of the sex of the person or persons to whom I'm ministering.

None

We talked about appropriate way to touch, it was very brief.

I was trained in the "mechanics" of baptism and celebrating the Eucharist but not in touch per se.

Reviewed scriptures pertaining to the laying on of hands and then discussion about how, when, and where to do so.

Mine was a Presbyterian seminary, so "sacramental" was not really a thing. However, I believe I remember some brief training on the wisdom of being alone with the opposite sex, but it doesn't stand out much.

The 'how' to hold a baby, the Host, handling ashes at funerals

We had a basic class on how to bless the Eucharist and perform a baptism. Maybe one class on theories.

We did a Preventing Ministerial Misconduct training that was uber-liberal in most aspects but did have some decent ideas within it. But because it was so liberal, it was hard to parse out the actually decent material from the stuff that was just absurd fluff (e.g. I remember the trainer waxing on and on about how brushing her hair was a very sexual experience for her, and to this day I have no idea what the purpose of that discussion was about other than that she wanted to sexualize everything). They may have discussed sacramental touch, but it might have gotten thrown out of my mind with the absurdities I heard.

**3. Did your seminary training (MDiv or other) include any training on pastoral touch? (yes, no, other)**

Yes	18
No	48
Other	4

**4. Please describe any training briefly**

Prayer ministry training as part of one of my field assignments included discussing the proper role of touch in healing ministry.

Most of the training focused on maintaining proper boundaries and how to touch / hug without giving offense.

Not specifically, but only in the "don't do anything bad" sense.

There was training on negative touch. What not to do and what is unacceptable. This falls under the category of what constitutes abuse or is inappropriate. The training is reactive in nature and not proactive or positive in nature.

My CPE class discussed the topic in an urban hospital setting.

Actually, did not know there was a difference between sacramental touch and pastoral touch. But...I have received instruction about touch in the training I have done regarding healing prayer.

Same as answer above

Can't remember.

hands on training for counseling, prayers

No formal training, but I have received training around this topic via my diocesan church planting coach

None

See above

In Pastoral Ethics class. Primarily "appropriate" touch. Was intended to train in the boundaries of how to touch, how not to touch.

More about avoiding the negatives of inappropriate touch than the positives

Centered around prayer and healing ministry, laying on of hands, and also appropriate safeguards/boundaries.

It was less training and more along the lines of making sure one is aware of their body space and not to be inappropriate.

See previous comment

none

When in a pastoral setting, we looked at how touch may be viewed and how to set up safe boundaries for touch.

I haven't had any systematic training in "good" pastoral touch, but quite a bit of training in inappropriate touching and physical contact as part of sexual abuse prevention.

Practicum left to students at local churches discretion.

Addressed in two sessions: (1) in a pastoral counseling class the professor touched upon touch in the context of the topic of 'boundaries' . . . as I recollect, he recognized the importance of boundaries, and emphasized the need for clergy to have insurance policies to protect themselves against wrongful lawsuits, yet in his estimation conservative Evangelical culture (c.2001) had allowed fear to dictate practices that restricted clergy from expressing their empathy in tangible ways . . . (2) in my supervised ministry practicum, my supervising pastor took me on a hospital visit; he modeled touching the patient for me; he encouraged me to not be afraid to 'appropriately' touch people as a literal incarnational ministry of Christ

Appropriate touch with those who you are counseling, comforting, praying for

In pastoral classes the emphasis was on appropriate ways to touch members of the flock.

The focus was more on being careful not to set yourself up for a false accusation.

There was advise on how to and how not to touch parishioners, especially in regards to private counseling settings and not in public spaces.

Safeguarding

In CPE I was assigned to a hospice unit. We were encouraged to touch patients' arms or shoulders if they were experiencing emotional distress.

**Your current Church Setting: policies**

**9. Does your current church have a child- safety policy? (yes, no, in process of being written or agreed, other)**

Yes	64
No	2
In process of being written and agreed	1
I am retired and work part time in an assisted living facility.	1
Diocesan training for clergy	1
Adhering to DOMA's training requirements, but nothing specific other than that.	1

**10. Does your current church have a sexual harassment policy? (yes, no, in process of being written or agreed, other)**

Yes	39
No	23
In process of being written and agreed	2
I don't think so.	4
Diocesan training for clergy (Guard Your Heart seminar)	1
I think it's in the staff handbook.	1

**11. Does your current church have a touch policy for greeters/ushers/other Sunday lay volunteers? (yes, no, in process of being written or agreed, other)**

Yes	16
No	37
In process of being written and agreed	0
I don't know	16
Not sure I know the answer	1

**12. Does your current church have a procedure in place for what to do if complaints are made about unhealthy touch in a pastoral or other situation? (yes, no, in process of being written or agreed, other)**

Yes	34
No	30
In process of being written and agreed	1
Not to my knowledge	4
For kids, yes, but for adults, no.	1
In our child protection policies	1

**10. Does your church have any other policies or material pertinent to this topic?  
e.g. in staff handbook or other. (yes, no, other)**

No

Not to my knowledge

No.

no

This would be really interesting, if you find any good policies etc chuck them my way

No. I am regular monthly supply for a very small church that has never had a full-time rector.

Not that I'm aware of

Yes. I do not think it is comprehensive, but it does cover these topics. We also use the diocese training and policies for DOMA and ACNA for child protection, as well as Ministry Safe.

Everyone in leadership and who works with children is required to complete the Ministry Safe teaching.

not known to me (but I am non-stipendary as I run a mission)

yes, we have the policies stated above.

Mainly use items from training at All Saints Anglican Church in Woodbridge

Staff and anyone working with children required to keep "Ministry Safe" training up to date.

Children's Ministry Policy

No NA.

No

Don't think so

I don't know.

not that I'm aware

Our dioceses does

Not aware.

Don't think so.

Probably in the Employee Manual.

Our Personnel Policy

I don't know

Yes. We have the DOMA materials.

I don't believe so.

Dealt with in training for Healing Prayer ministries

No. In fact most of our policies are not written down. We should write them down!  
We have trainings, especially for prayer ministers, about how to engage in touch. Most of the touch policies relate to minors and not adults, though.  
Yes, in our policy manual.  
yes

### **Sacramental Touch**

**10. How conscious are you (as a member of the clergy) of the way you use touch during the course of a service? (1-5, 1= very conscious, 5= not at all conscious)**

Value	Count
1	40
2	19
3	8
4	1
5	2

### **11. Comment**

When people are at the rail for communion, I place the host in each communicants hand and allow my hand to make contact with theirs. People will often raise their heads to look into my eyes or smile or acknowledge the touch in some positive way. I feel that this helps connect my people to Christ in an intimate and silent but safe way.

I use touch prayerfully, intentionally, and cautiously.

I will often gently and very briefly hold the hand of someone who is going through a difficult time after I give them the host.

blessing a person or a child can be a critical type of ministry. Comfort of the needy often require touch if one is to be truly compassionate.

I usually ask people something like, "May I put my hand on your shoulder?" In the parish context, I have a good sense of who needs to be asked and who does not, based on my personal relationship with them.

I have seen churches and clergy sued. I am very conscious.

Touch help make sacramental acts truly incarnational and not merely symbolic

I am also a Registered Nurse

As a woman who has been made uncomfortable by touch in the past, I feel fairly aware of the importance and power of healthy affection and boundaries

I'm conscious of how I use it during communion as I give the elements (whether I press the bread into someone's hand and linger a half-beat), and how I bless children and

adults, making the sign of the cross on them. I'm also aware of when and how I touch (or do not touch) parishioners in prayer during the service or before and after the service.

Respectful approach toward those I do not know. Awareness of appropriate place and touch with a person of the opposite sex, so that touch will not be misinterpreted.

I always touch lightly on the side of the upper arm.

If I know someone is in distress, I place a hand on their shoulder.

As a male Vocational Deacon I am very aware of not touching unless touched or with permission, for example during the sacramental Ritual of Laying on of Hands and Anointing (ok to place hand on head and administer oil).

Torn between truly wanting to communicate genuine love for people while absolutely terrified of it being misinterpreted and being sued.

I am aware of both the power and warmth of appropriate contact and boundaries for inappropriate contact.

Was taught to put both hands on a woman at waist and hold her away from your person.

Men - take their lead.

I am somewhat touchy, a hand on the shoulder, a hug, etc. I realize it's part of my personality, and recognize that I'm not always as conscious about it as I could be.

While handshakes and hugs during 'The Peace' are perhaps our most obvious times of intentional touch during worship, from my perspective the most significant intentional times of touch are when I place the Bread in the palm of communicants. Once, while I was making the sign of the cross on the forehead of a child during distribution of the elements, I cried because I knew that may be the last time I had the privilege of blessing that child because the family was relocating several hours away.

I do not hug other women at the peace or after the service / during baptisms / in healing prayer

Hugging vs. shaking hands communicates an incredible distinction about how we want to view each other as church members--family and friends rather than acquaintances.

However, it's always awkward with at least one person, whether hugging or shaking hands. Doing one or the other with any person will communicate either distance or closeness, and if a clergy isn't consistent, then it communicates levels of closeness. But if a clergy isn't careful, the hugging can seem invasive, and the shaking of hands can seem cold and distant.

Particularly at communion and in the receiving line.

**How important is touch in the following sacramental moments for you? Does the touch seem appropriate? Meaningful? Or distracting?**



**12. Baptism (1-5, 1 = unimportant, 5 = essential)**

Value	Count
1	0
2	0
3	2
4	12
5	56

**13. Eucharist (1-5, 1 = unimportant, 5 = essential)**

Value	Count
1	2
2	4
3	16
4	28
5	20

**14. Weddings (1-5, 1 = unimportant, 5 = essential)**

Value	Count
1	0
2	7
3	22
4	19
5	22

**15. Funerals (1-5, 1 = unimportant, 5 = essential)**

Value	Count
1	2
2	3
3	7
4	36
5	21

**16. Passing the Peace (1-5, 1 = unimportant, 5 = essential)**

Value	Count
1	1

2	1
3	7
4	19
5	42

### **17. What brings you greatest joy in these moments of touch?**

Helping people know they are loved

The connection among the people of God with God through the body (all double entendres intended).

Good response

Making a human connection in the presence of God.

The sense of connection and unity with the congregants that touch enables

Connection with others, especially in the Sacraments.

Showing and making a Connection. Showing Compassion and empathy.

We are the Body of Christ and His Spirit is within us. When we touch another in His Love as an incarnational expression of His love, it can be very powerful.

a sense of Christian family; the tangible 'body of Christ'

Witnessing the comfort accepted to the grieving.

Seeing appreciation on the face of the person I am touching, experiencing a connection with them.

Incarnating the love of Jesus

The awareness that I am representing Christ to His people, and letting them know that He sees them and cares for them.,

Eucharist

Knowing that my hands are being used as the hands of Christ to communicate his love, healing and assurance.

Done well, it can greatly add to the pastoral connection - which is such a blessing to me as well as the people I'm ministering to.

communicating understanding, concerns and love for the person

Knowing that the Spirit through my touch has strengthened our encouraged those I minister to.

From a sacramental perspective, you can't have a sacrament without touch--at the very least, touching of the elements of the sacrament (water, bread, wine), but more often some amount of touch with the people receiving the sacrament. It's a fundamental part of an incarnational faith. So when touch is involved in these sacred moments, it's a way not only of connecting with those receiving the sacrament, but also of affirming that bodies

matter, that our physicality is a good gift from God, that God meets us in our embodied-ness, no matter the age, shape, or appearance of those bodies.

\*Re: funerals, above: touch isn't essential, per the liturgy, for the living at the funeral (unless there's a passing of the peace or Eucharist); but the commendation requires a laying of hands on the casket or vessel holding the remains. Technically, I guess this isn't human touch, since the body/remains are no longer alive. But still it strikes me as a profoundly powerful, human, and necessary moment, liturgically and sacramentally. It just wouldn't be the same if I spoke the words of commendation without laying hands on the remains.

sense of gentle connection, caring

My joy comes from the natural and appropriate expressions of familial affection within the body of Christ. People are strongly affirmed as Christ's own within the family of God in these moments.

The connection that happens, the feeling of being a family.

Smiles on peoples faces!

anointing with oil and the sign of the cross

Eye-to-eye contact with safe touch on the hands, shoulders, sometimes cheek which emphasize the oneness Christ gives us in these moments.

Connection

Helping to mediate the deepest experiences of the reality of God and being in union with Christ

Appropriate contact builds pastoral connectedness and affirms parishioners.

Connecting

Connection with the other person.

Touching a person's hand giving them the Eucharist.

Connections with others

Knowing that I know the person and how I should interact with them. Some people are comfortable with touch while others aren't

Human connection founded in Christ

When someone responds back

Letting the people know your care and love them.

That while you're looking to impress some kind of blessing and care upon a person in the name of Christ, there is a physical impression of that intention, a manifestation on their person of that blessing and care.

Connection

Inclusiveness and personal connection; inclusion of individuals within the corporate framework of the sacraments via sacramental touch.

The opportunity to show pastoral affection with a touch and a smile.

Serving communion - placing wafer in recipient's hand

Connecting with the person physically to express support or welcome.

Connection w/ parishioners

The pleasure/comfort I see in response.

Touch really isn't my thing. If there is touch initiated it is for the benefit of those I am ministering to.

Knowing that I have the opportunity to be a conduit for the Spirit's presence in that moment.

Affirming someone, letting them know I care, felling a connection with people, reminding them that God cares for them.

Interaction

The realization that I am a conduit for God's love in these moments.

People feeling the love of the body of Christ, not just hearing about it. In certain circumstances, having a hug when they aren't usually offered a hug by people, or being reassured of the church's real and tangible presence in various moments (ie. grief).

Baptism: sealing with oil. Eucharist: placing bread in the palm. Funerals: (1) placing a hand on the casket or urn during the closing prayer — thus (indirectly) touching the deceased on behalf of the congregation and loved ones; (2) tossing dirt on the casket during the committal/burial.

The spiritual reality of declaring truth through the sacrament

The feeling of passing on blessing

I would have to say the passing of the peace. You want everyone to feel welcomed and loved.

Shared community across ages

Communicating the affection and love of God for the other person. They are being "touched" by God through the sacramental moments in the service and through the life of the church and its leadership.

I have been fortunate to baptise two infants. The holding of the baby the parents watching how I was holding the baby. Dad has the look of don't you dare drop her/him and Mom telegraphing hope everything goes well. The moment the water is poured over the child's head what will be the response. There the carrying the newly baptized to greet their family.

I don't know. I never thought it was about me. For instance, in weddings touch is essential, but my personal touch (or not) is irrelevant.

Warmth of connection - beyond words.

**How important is touch for you when praying for others?**

**18. Anointing with oil (1-5, 1 = *unimportant*, 5 = *essential*)**

Value	Count
1	1
2	2
3	8
4	11
5	48

**19. Healing Prayer (1-5, 1 = *unimportant*, 5 = *essential*)**

Value	Count
1	1
2	0
3	8
4	30
5	31

**20. Prayer for comfort for the afflicted (1-5, 1 = *unimportant*, 5 = *essential*)**

Value	Count
1	1
2	0
3	9
4	29
5	29

**21. What brings you greatest joy in these moments of touch?**

Again - helping people know they are known & loved

If it helps the other person rather than me. I'm a bit of a wally and have been known to hold on too long

Knowing that Jesus also healed through touch, and that I am using God's power for healing.

Touching someone while praying for them in the midst of pain is a powerful means by which we can pass on the healing power of Christ. I have felt on several occasions His healing power flow from em to another person when touching them appropriately during prayer.

The sense in which the Holy Spirit is connecting us and coursing through us, ministering to those for whom we pray in ways that we cannot describe or fully understand; the sense in which our touch is another form of compassion and empathy that allows to enter into another's pain

Again, connection, as it is a tangible sign of God at work.

Same as other. Connection and Compassion.

The look in their eyes as they receive this ministry.

Making simple, chaste human contact.

Feeling a sense of connection to them and their suffering.

Human connection

Joining with people in their suffering and seeing God bless them through prayer.

Healing Prayer

See answer on question above

Suffering and sickness are often isolating. Touching another person breaks down that sense of isolation.

When it feels like the touch is not from me, but from the Lord.

extending God's love and anointing to the person

When they share afterward that they felt an impartation of the HS

When consent for touch is given, it's a moment of profound connection with the person you're praying for/ministering to. More than that, I do think that God often chooses to work through our human touch. It's not necessary, but it can be powerful--and again is a demonstration of the goodness of embodiment.

comfort, connection; feeling the power of Holy Spirit

I think touch in those situations brings great comfort, most people reach out for a hand, or a hug. Being a safe person that can give that kind of comfort brings me joy.

relief for the suffering, and actual healing in body, soul, or spirit for the sufferer.

Being Jesus with "skin" on. Someone they can touch...if they want to.

Remembering Christ's touch for those who needed healing and transferring His compassion through sacred touch.

Reminding people of presence of Jesus

Tangibly bridging the perception of isolation from God and others that those in these situations may feel.

Providing comfort

Sense of oneness.

Seeing the person I am praying for being visibly moved.

Connection with others

The intimacy of the moment that we are experiencing Christ's presence together

Hoping that the Lord will use me to comfort

Touch point lets the person know and sense the presence of the Holy Spirit.

I think touch is one of the means through which we can minister the love of God, though

I do believe levels of touch depend on the relationship

Knowing that there's an opportunity to give a physical tenderness in people's hard places, possibly and likely where there has been little touch and much isolation. Physical consolation in the midst of multiple types of isolation.

The communication of God's love to others through touch, particularly those who are infirm or handicapped.

Making contact to let them know they aren't alone.

The sense of spiritual/physical connection.

Seeing the peace that touching brings about.

Being in physical partnership with Jesus while ministering to someone.

Response of participant

Similarly, to reassure that the comfort we are asking for is tangible through the body of Christ as well as through the Holy Spirit...If I wanted to sound intelligent about it, I would say it is a subtle way of subverting the dualism of gnosticism.

In healing prayer: sensing the real Presence of the Holy Spirit and not even needing to touch the recipient. BTW: I am concerned when it comes to comforting "the afflicted" that people can overdo touch . . . sometimes people need to be allowed space to grieve and process and seek God on their own . . . sometimes we touch more for our own benefit than for the recipient.

See answer before

I would say when congregants are spiritually touched by the Lord through me.

See my previous comment. Same idea--the "touch of God" for those who need it.

Of course it depends on the person who is receiving the prayer. In healing prayer I was with one other layperson praying healing of a shoulder and arm of the person. The shoulder and arm became so hot and the temperature of the 3 people was much greater than normal.

Seeing God actually heal someone!

Reminding a person they are not alone.

**22. Please respond to this statement: In my church, clergy use touch deliberately in prayer ministry (1-6, 1 = In my church, clergy use touch in prayer ministry, 6= In my church, clergy do not use touch in prayer ministry)**

Value	Count
1	24
2	24
3	11
4	3
5	4
6	4

**23. Do you have a policy for the use of touch in prayer ministry? (If you do and would be willing to share please send to [liz@incarnationanglican.org](mailto:liz@incarnationanglican.org)) (yes, no, other)**

Yes	17
No	41
Not sure	10
All healing prayer ministers ask permission to touch any one first	1
I have addressed it in some ministry training sessions	1

#### **24. Comment**

My policy is touch but don't stroke

We are doing training in August and we can follow up.

You never touch without asking permission. When crossing gender, you ask the person to place their hand on the part that is being prayed for (if appropriate!) and then you lay your hand on theirs.

The policy is simple to always ask permission and follow the recipient's desire.

I work with 3 male coworkers, so whenever we do prayer ministry, they always ensure that either myself or another female coworker is the one taking the lead on praying for women. They don't typically touch women in prayer, and neither do I lay hands on men when praying for them.

Verbal policy that I train clergy with, but it is not in writing

See above.

Our church has no policy

We don't have a written policy, but there is an expectation that prayer ministers ask for consent before touching someone.



Do not have such a policy. Try to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit

We always ask permission first

Touch in public and in an appropriate place and way usually with a prayer partner.

The policy is not so robust or discussed much. We ask permission if we believe it would be appropriate to lay hands, and it is always two ministers (often a male and a female pair) with someone receiving ministry so it keeps things above board. This is more of an unspoken policy, but often the touch happens between same gendered people (save for anointing with oil, in which gender is not a factor).

Ask permission prior to touching

In my observation of prayer ministry, permission is requested before touch with anyone who may be new to our church. Generally, I defer touch with a person of the opposite sex, unless a person of the same sex is also ministering with me.

I don't think we have it written down, but we follow widely used guidelines from Christian Healing Ministries and Global Awakening.

Not written, but covered in instructions

No formal or ongoing prayer ministry . . . such ministry is currently ad hoc.

Basic policy: ask before touching, never touch private areas, and if the area that is in need of healing is a private area or close to one (e.g., a woman's chest), then ask to touch the woman's back or shoulder. In general, stay in general body areas, light touching only, and always with permission. Best to pray in such a way with more than one person present.

### **Pastoral Touch**

**How important is touch in the following pastoral moments for you? Do you use touch deliberately?**

**25. Greeting parishioners as they enter the service (1-5, 1 = *unimportant*, 5 = *essential*)**

Value	Count
1	4
2	3
3	20
4	34
5	9

**26. Greeting parishioners as they leave the service (1-5, 1 = *unimportant*, 5 = *essential*)**

Value	Count
1	1
2	5
3	21
4	30
5	13

**27. In my church, clergy use touch in pastoral ministry (1-6, 1 = *In my church, clergy use touch in pastoral ministry*, 6= *In my church, clergy do not use touch in pastoral ministry*)**

Value	Count
1	15
2	31
3	10
4	6
5	6
6	2

**28. Comment**

Had to stop someone touching too much

This can be delicate. Here, I always ask if I can give a hug before I do. 99% welcome it, but I don't want to invade space without permission.

Our rector is definitely not a "touchy" person. Doesn't even seem to welcome hugs at any time.

With other women, and close friends or parishioners, I find that I often hug.

No comment

Holding the hand, giving a hug, a kiss on the forehead

If people do not want to be greeted with a handshake or hug, they usually exit via a side door instead of where we stand.

Again, touch is never demanded or required, but frequently employed.

All our clergy shake hands with the congregation as they are leaving. I, as a middle aged woman, seem to be a safe person to many of the parishioners-and I tend to get and give lots of hugs also. My Male British rector is not a hugger, but does shake hands.

Some use touch others do not.

According to appropriateness for the person receiving

I'm aware that touch is important. It's important to be aware of those who don't like it.  
Again appropriate reasonable touching brings a human element to the ministry.  
Not much touch in 1-1 pastoral appointments, save for public greetings or sendings after the more private appointment.  
Again, the use of a hand on the arm. If someone wants a hug I offer a hug that doesn't allow for any contact below the shoulder if a female.  
I can't speak for the other clergy but I hold hands (if appropriate) when praying and anointing.  
Pastoral ministry always involved prayer, which so often involved "laying a hand on someone's shoulder."  
[at this point it would be nice to know one's status in completion of this survey . . . beginning to want it to be done . . . would be nice to have an outline of the survey before starting it so that one knows what to expect]  
Anointing of oil / laying on of hands (after permission is given)

## **29. What brings you greatest joy in these moments of touch?**

Once again, it is the connection and the sharing of the body.  
Connection; seeing and being seen. It's hard to ignore that someone is touching you, and I think it helps to feel that one has been seen and recognized.  
Connection  
Again, it is an incarnational thing. Showing the love of Christ in a tangible way.  
Pastoral ministry  
Good to touch the "lambs" as they go out and share their joys and concerns  
Having stinging hands from the enthusiastic "high fives" of our children. That contact feels very significant.  
Building up those I touch  
sense of comfort  
Again, feeling like we are family.  
Smiles and statements of relief.  
Letting parishioners know they are seen, recognized, loved, appreciated, and affirmed as members of the Body of Christ. Seeing their recognition of this kind of pastoral care.  
Connection and welcoming people  
Communicating that others are welcomed and loved by God  
Connecting  
Connecting to people.  
Touch minimizes perceived stand-offishness.

Physically greeting and sending is delightful because it's a physical manifestation of my joy to see them, to worship with them - they matter to me, I'm glad they're here. It also expresses/affirms a certain level of intimacy in community. I don't give the same physical touch to everyone - a hand shake and an arm around a person mean two different things.

Connection and response to God's direction at these moments.

The chance to express my love and concern.

I'm not particularly a "touchy" person; I do it more out of perceived help for the recipient than as something a truly/greatly enjoy...

Individual's response

Feeling connected, offering reassurance.

Similar to above answers on providing a tangible sense of comfort from the church, not just etherial comfort for the soul.

Jesus touched people and it brought comfort - biblical touch can bring comfort

Knowing that people feel welcomed and loved.

Again, never thought about it. It's not about me.

Showing someone they are worthy of being touched.

### 30. Do you have a policy for the use of touch in pastoral ministry? (yes, no, other)

Yes	17
No	42
I'm not sure.	1
Standard guidelines for DOMA and ACNA	1
per Ministry Safe instructions	1
Best practices, but not a formal policy	1
I don't know.	1
Dont know for the church i serve. My policy is to be sensitive to how people respond and not cross the line.	1
I have not been in my position long enough to know. My sense is that we do not have a written policy.	1
Instructions for new people and review for regulars	1
Don't know	1
Not a stated policy, but again mentioning it from time to time, and being very wary as a clergy person with how this is done appropriately with the opposite sex.	1
In prayer ministry, ask if people are OK with laying on of hands.	1

**31. Consider a recent pastoral meeting when you deliberately used touch and it was responded to negatively. What was the nature of the touch (a hand on a shoulder, a hug etc)? Did you ask for their consent to touch? Why did you choose to touch them? Did you follow up with the individual whom you touched? How did it make you feel?**

No event comes to mind

I always ask for consent for hugs ... but on occasion will reach out and lightly touch a shoulder or arm or head. Never anywhere else, unless invited in healing prayer to touch a back, knee, etc. Never on the body core ... that's too close for comfort.

No experience

I cannot think of such an occasion.

Have not had a negative reaction to my knowledge

This wasn't recent, but I hugged a man and he stiffened. I apologized and he explained that culturally it was unacceptable. So I thanked him for letting me know and said I would try to be more sensitive to that from now on.

has only happened when blessing children

My use of touch is considered and, if applicable, with the permission of the other person. I have not had a negative response to touch in a pastoral meeting. But if my touch were received negatively, I imagine that I would feel ashamed and would want to apologize quickly.

N/a

I don't think I've ever had a negative reaction to touch in pastoral situations. I don't tend to touch people unless I know them well and know that touch would be welcome.

The nature of touch was a shoulder. I did not ask for consent to touch. It was a friendly touch. Yes, I reach out to follow-up. A rejected feeling.

Wife and I were counseling a lady in the church who had an issue with a liturgical change. We had talked with her about what was going on and she had sighted issues with her father as why she was reacting to the change and seemed to be very upset, I don't really even think with us, but was projecting issues with her father. She went to get up and my wife asked if we could prayer with her and as she did, my wife put out her hand toward the lady's shoulder as if to give comfort, when the lady pushed it away and said that she did not want to pray or be touched, as that was what her father used to do. When we called later that evening to follow-up with her, she apologized and said she had lots of issues from her father and was embarrassed by how she had reacted. We chatted for a bit, and then my wife and I prayed with her over the phone. The lady was responsive to us at church the following Sunday and gave us hugs. As to how it made me feel, I think I was a little saddened to see how much of "an infected wound" this particular lady still had from her father and a bit shocked since she was in leadership in the church and had always

seemed very "quiet and gentle." There was obviously a lot going on beneath the surface. I think my wife reached out intuitively in compassion not realizing the hurts that were still there. The reaction of this particular lady was very atypical of most people's reactions, but is a reminder of how hurting people may react very differently.

I don't have an experience like this to share.

A gave a side hug to an individual who did not want it. I later apologized. It made them feel uncomfortable.

I honestly can't think of one. More often it's that I tend toward less touch (a handshake vs. a hug), and people seem a little put out.

Usually ask for permission to touch; I'm sure that in the past touch was responded to negatively, but don't remember the details!

I am very sensitive to how I use touch. I realize that some people are very uncomfortable with touch, and I try very hard to read and respond to a person's needs. I am careful about asking to touch people, especially before prayer. The last time I made someone uncomfortable with touch was with a fellow clergy woman, whom I have known for years and consider a friend. She is not a hugger. I forgot that recently, and greeted her with my arms open. As she awkwardly hugged me, I thought, "Darn, I forgot she isn't a hugger". I did not apologize, but remembered the next time I saw her to shake her hand, and not offer a hug.

none

NA

I always ask permission first, so I've not had that experience.

I asked a young woman recently if I could give her a hug she said yes. However, there was not emotion from her. I choose to hug her because she recently lost her mother. I realized, to late, that her mother probably never hugged her. I felt sad for her because she...by her own admission is not able to stay in a long term relationship.

I can't recall a time when my touch was responded to negatively. When someone is angry in a meeting, I either avoid touch or ask permission. I learned this years ago when I was counseling a molestation survivor and I reached to touch her shoulder as I prayed for her. She said, "Please don't touch me." From that point on, I always asked her permission to touch her. The relationship lasted for years and was very positive. It was a great lesson about when and when not to touch and with whom to ask permission before touching. This happened to me as a chaplain but not as a parish minister. The woman was crying and jerked from my touch on her shoulder. She did want anyone representing God to be with her. It was hard because I took it personally but had to realize there was more hurt here and I hadn't asked permission.

Learned a lesson to not be the first to initiate

Can't recall a time

Hand shake (mutual).

Cannot recall a negative response.

None

Haven't had any issues with that

I have not had a negative experience with a pastoral meeting.

A regular parishioner, a new mother with some special needs, seeks a side hug from me every week. This she appreciates. Once while hugging her I kissed the top of her head, a peck, and she told me straightaway that she thought that inappropriate. I thought she would appreciate this gesture of affection. I was wrong. I felt badly, embarrassed, introspective.

I have not been having official pastoral meetings lately (leave).

I haven't ever had that happen.

Can't think of such an instance.

Nothing recently I am aware of.

I cannot recall a negative experience w/ 'touch'.

Placing a hand on the shoulder, individual drew back. i did not follow-up and was saddled that I made the individual uncomfortable.

A parishioner and key volunteer was headed out the door after serving on a Sunday - she looked tired - and I attempted to pat her on the back while saying thank you for her leadership that morning. She turned her shoulder and her body language made it clear she did not want to be touched. I stepped back and just re-affirmed how much we all appreciated her service. It was such a brief moment that it didn't seem to warrant a follow-up. It made me feel - yet again - that we live in such a suspicious and complicated time when the slightest thing may be cause for offense.

Some teenage boys respond to a hug or handshake, others don't seem comfortable with it. I haven't known of a negative experience to touch. I tend to lean (perhaps too much?) on asking "are you comfortable if I lay a hand on your shoulder?" I think once someone said no, so I didn't.

Can't recollect a negative response.

N/A - Never had a negative experience

I don't have negative responses. I always ask.

N/A

With door open and others in building asked to lay hands for prayer in regards to some deep physical problems and grief; person was leary because of being told she had a demon by someone who laid hands on her in high-school telling her she had a demon. It's usually only an awkward response, and it has to do with hugs or handshakes that should have been one or the other. One thing that's hard to handle is how to say "goodbye" without a hug or handshake. Sometimes a handshake seems too formal and distant after a deep meeting, but a hug seems maybe too close. It always feels awkward in such situations, and I'm not sure how to even follow up on it, if I should at all. There are some people who do not like to be touched in a congregate setting and it is best to remember who they are.

A side hug / no / it's a habit with this person and me / yes / a little confused & embarrassed that I had evidently crossed some kind of boundary that doesn't usually exist between them and me.

The person said they needed to be touched and often weren't. So I affirmed that need and gave a hug.

**32. Consider a recent pastoral meeting when you deliberately used touch and it was responded to positively. What was the nature of the touch (a hand on a shoulder, a hug etc)? Did you ask for their consent to touch? Why did you choose to touch them? Did you follow up with the individual whom you touched? How did it make you feel?**

I was praying for someone and I put my hand on their shoulder. I don't remember if I asked for their consent. It felt like a good connection with them, but I did not follow up afterward about it.

Unless I know that the answer will be yes because of prior comments (Oh, yes, I'm a hugger ... or something like that) I always ask first, except for prayer rail prayer, where I put my hands on heads of those who are kneeling for prayer.

Hugs and touches create an intimacy that words cannot ... and intimacy of the heart.

I tend to touch in a very non-threatening way during prayer -- if I am led to touch at all. Sometimes I feel it necessary to act as a "conduit", sometimes as a compassionate touch if it doesn't interfere with the prayer; sometimes not at all, depending on the person. I try to follow the Spirit's leading at all times in this.

Hand on the shoulder while praying, yes I asked permission. I was praying for healing and following the instruction to "Lay hands on the sick." I sensed the Lord moving in their life as we prayed. I was glad I was able to pray for the person and he seemed to draw comfort from the experience.



Hand-on-hand when counseling a student (same-sex as me). I think I asked if I could give her a hug and hold her hand as we prayed. It helped me feel as though I was truly comforting her when she needed it, and standing with her in prayer as we prayed. During requested prayer, I asked if I could put a hand on a shoulder as I prayed. Consent was given. We prayed. I chose to do this to connect and to impart blessing and healing. Felt led by the spirit. This was Tuesday. I have not followed up.

I have an autistic parishioner. She explained that "hard hugs" are something that are very soothing for her, so now I know that she wants me to hug her - hard!

Generally a (brief) hand on the shoulder is appreciated.

Yesterday I gave a hug to a man who was really hurting. He had started crying during our meeting. I did not ask him if I could hug him, I just embraced him at the end of our meeting. I wanted him to know that he was not alone. I wanted to affirm the bridge between us and make it secure so that he could call on me again in the future for emotional and spiritual support.

Hand on shoulder, I did ask permission, I touched them as a sign of connection within The Body, I did not follow up, I didn't notice how I felt because the moment wasn't about the touch

I often meet with women one to one, and as our friendship progresses, we do hug each other. I take time to establish a level of comfort with someone before I would attempt to touch them.

Nature of touch, hug. Yes, I ask for consent. A comforting hug. I did not follow-up with the individual. A loving feeling.

Prayed for a lady at her home from the church that had knee surgery. I asked if I could touch the knee and prayed for proper healing as she was concerned about redness and swelling. Gave communion. Laid hands on her head as prayed for her in general. She had a doctor's appt. that Thursday to check on the redness and swelling. She sent me an e-mail on that Thursday, before I called her to check on her, that the appointment went well and that everything looked great. She said the redness and swelling had gone away about an hour after I prayed, so she was excited to tell me about that. I called her and follow-up and she reiterated about the healing of the redness and swelling. Was nice to receive the e-mail and confirmation on the phone concerning the healing of the redness and swelling as a confirmation that the Lord does heal, so that made me happy and joyful for her that she had been healed and that God was continuing his healing work through the doctors. I believe in the power of touch as a point of contact in bringing God's healing power to people, so this is why I touched her knee and head. Jesus touched people, so we follow His example. We are not simply spirits, but Spirits in bodies, so it is important that we

use the "sacrament" of our bodies to communicate His healing touch to people. It is not magic, but simply allowing Christ's healing to come to people through us. Jesus is the one that heals though through the power of the Holy Spirit. We don't have to heal with touch, as Christ healed with a word, but many times it is reassuring and helpful to touch in healing ministry as we are connecting as the Body of Christ and as those with a treasure in earthen vessels.

Yes, I asked for permission first if I could hug them. The woman was weeping over a dead pet and I wanted to comfort her with more than just my words. I wanted her to know she wasn't alone and I understood her suffering. I did not follow up in a formal way, but I continued to see this person on a regular basis afterward. It made me feel good to offer comfort in a hug.

A pat on the shoulder. It affirmed the individual

There are some parishioners I regularly hug when greeting them on Sundays, and others whom I regularly shake hands with. If they're regular huggers, I don't usually ask for consent each time. Recently, one man whom I normally greet with a hug, I could only reach him for a handshake the first time I saw him that morning. Later, he jokingly said, "I was afraid you'd decided you didn't like me anymore" as he opened his arms for a hug. There was nothing creepy about it; it just felt like an affirmation of our appreciation for each other. It made me feel loved and valued. Also, most of my parishioners are at least old enough to be my parents--which doesn't eliminate the possibility of uncomfortable touch, certainly (whether initiated by me or them) but does affect the dynamic of it.

Praying for someone I often look for where I see the Holy Spirit on them, especially on their head, shoulders. Last Sunday I was praying for someone with a tumor in their ear - I did not touch them, but put my hand near the area, and felt the power of God in my hand; the person did not say anything, but it is not unusual that someone says they felt power/energy coming from my hand; once someone told me that they felt so much heat they were grateful I didn't touch them.

As I said above, I am very careful to ask people before I even put a hand on their shoulder. I do this every time, even if they have said yes in the past. Recently, during a pastoral meeting with a woman I have known for a decade, I ended up embracing her as I prayed for her, very much like a mother. It was a beautiful time, she needs healing in her relationship with her own Mother. This action seemed very healing, and she initiated the hug. Afterwards, I felt privileged to be trusted in that way, and grateful to be used in some small way to help her know that she is loved.

During healing prayers. It is appreciated. I sometimes ask before laying on of hands. It depends on my relationship with the person.

Too many to recount

Touch is used in the tradition of how Jesus used it in discipling his followers as being efficacious.

I asked to hug an elderly woman recently. She clung to me saying..."no one has touched or hugged me in years." I didn't follow up but every time I see her I hug her. I feel great...she feels loved.

Over 25 years of ministry, touch has been a powerful tool for me as a woman minister. I had more freedom to use safe and sacred touch than most male ministers. As I got older (I am 65 and just recently retired), I could use safe and sacred touch with more effectiveness than when I was younger. I touch hands most frequently and give (safe, appropriate) hugs to many of my parishioners. I will sometimes touch the face gently at the side of the cheek with the tips of my fingers in healing prayer (I always let them know ahead of time) and sometimes when delivering the Eucharist if the parishioner is going through a particular time of suffering. I became aware over the years that it was really less me touching them and more Christ touching them through me. Yes, that was a blessing to me but it was also humbling and awe-inspiring.

Used touch during healing prayer and the person was grateful.

No need to followup

Premarital counseling when extended hands to couple to pray together after session. Did not ask for consent. Felt that holding hands as prayed embodied their union with one another and God that we had been exploring. Good sense of peace and closure.

Don't usually ask if I know the person well; sometimes ask when used in prayer.

Hand shake and hug (mutual).

Holding a hand during prayer. Person was moved and responded well. Did not ask to touch, but offered my hand and they took it. I chose to hold their hand to feel closer to them when I prayed, and so that we felt connected in prayer. A person in the hospital needs all the comforting we can offer.

The person I was praying with asked for a hug at the close of our prayer time

We hug after service. A person came up, I put out my hand and they warmly grabbed it so I gave a hug and they responded back warmly.

I usually anoint with oil to the forehead and always ask to do so. After anointing if a woman for healing prayer I ask permission to lay my hand on top of her hand and she puts her hand on her body where she is asking for healing prayer. There are places where I don't place my hand on her hand so I hold her hand for prayer. I ask permission to lay hands on the back or top of the head. I have asked permission to touch the eye, cheek, or throat area if praying for upper respiratory problems or sight problems.

For men I also ask for permission to touch if the area of the body is appropriate otherwise I lay hands on top of the head after anointing on the forehead.

A hug for a woman crying and grieving the death of her dog just then. I did not ask for consent, I saw her need for comfort. Her husband told me it meant a great deal to both of them that I hugged her. I felt pleased and thankful that I accurately assessed her need, God be praised.

I recently held hands with a woman at the nursing home. I didn't ask for permission but it felt natural and it was responded to warmly. It seemed to enhance our connection as I prayed for her and listened to her

I have not been having official pastoral meetings lately (leave).

It has been my experience as female clergy that touch has been a very meaningful and redeeming part of my ministry in my church. People often receive touch from me as safe and welcoming, whether that is a handshake, hug, etc.

The touch was a response to a request by a woman for healing prayer. The individual asked for prayer for her hands, and I asked her if I could hold her hands while I prayed and anointed her hands. She willingly gave her consent. I followed up with her the next week, and she thanked me for the experience of touch while I prayed.

One of our elderly women was upset and I gave her a side hug and a kiss on top of her head. She came to me later and told me how much it meant to her. She felt cared for.

I've never had an instance where there wasn't some kind of positive response - or no response. (I'm assuming the person appreciated the hand on shoulder, hand-to-hand, etc. Mid-week healing service with anointing, expected and well received. Also passing the peace at services where handshakes are expected and welcome.

This past Sunday, prior to the processional hymn, I encountered a parishioner who had just lost their father. I didn't have time to say anything, so I just gave him a hug and then joined the procession. While I didn't follow up with this parishioners, I believe my 'touch' was welcomed and encouraging.

A reaching up to grasp my hand (positively). No follow-up. Felt good that I had made, or appear to have comforted them.

Most of the time, it seems that hugs, hands on the shoulder, handshakes, and high fives are appreciated and generally boost moral for all our people and volunteers. For me - not all touch is a deliberate, intentional thing - often I am simply trying to show everyone that I see them, they are important, and I'm glad that they're here. Of course a positive response makes me feel good - because it lets me know that the relationship is strong and that we're a team together.

Some folks at church look forward to a hug from me as pastor.

I also don't know of a time when touch was particularly appreciated, though I have had many times of prayer that involved a hand on someone's shoulder, which have been positive.

Hugging parishioner (who is a 'hugger') on their sickbed.

Praying for a parishioner I anointed them with oil - the parishioner felt extreme comfort by both the cross being made on their forehead and by the feel of the oil

I usually touch to reassure and to pray. I think both me and the person being prayed for feel blessed by the connection.

I can't recall at the moment. However I think you can use common sense to determine whether touch is wanted or not. When in doubt I rather not use touch.

In follow-up counseling session of the above asked permission of the woman to be prayed for to have office administrator (who I had prepared for the possibility of prayer with people in other settings) come in and pray with her. She consented and I laid a hand on her shoulder for healing prayer (as did office administrator). Very positive response. There have been moments in which a hug in recent months has been critical. It's communicated acceptance and comfort and care, especially for someone who is struggling or grieving. There have been times in which a handshake or no touch at all would have been inadequate, especially because 90% of communication is non-verbal. I can think of a handful of situations that completely transformed an encounter because of a hug. And it felt like that was the right choice.

a hug / no / That's what we do to demonstrate mutual affection (See I Thess 2:8) / no, not necessary / contented

Hand touch - that they were worthy. And that I was attentive to them.

**Personal view of touch: an exploration around the extent to which you are aware of touch in your daily life**

**33. Do you notice touch in your daily life? (1-5, 1 = I notice it a lot, 5 = I do not notice it)**

Value	Count
1	26
2	23
3	18
4	2
5	1

**34. How do you find the experience of casual touch? e.g. a hand on a shoulder during a conversation (1-5, 1= Hate it, 5 = love it)**

Value	Count
1	0
2	6
3	29
4	24
5	10

**35. At the end of the day, are you aware if you have been touched during the course of the day? (yes, sometimes, no)**

Yes	34
Sometimes	28
No	7

**36. Do you generally consider touch as "unsafe" or "safe?" (1-5, 1= Unsafe, 5 = safe)**

Value	Count
1	0
2	0
3	16
4	37
5	15

**37. Which of the following words do you immediately associate with touch? (select all that apply) Check all that apply. (Warm, Claustrophobic, Loving, Frightening, Hurtful, Unsettling, Calming, Uncomfortable, Awkward, Grounding, Reassuring, Other:)**

Value	Count
Warm	61
Claustrophobic	4
Loving	52
Frightening	0
Hurtful	0
Unsettling	6
Calming	43
Uncomfortable	10
Awkward	13
Grounding	21

Reassuring	49
Hilarious	1
My response here often depends on who i...	1
if in an unwanted instance (which occas...	1
affirming	1
Friendly	1
Caveat: It REALLY depends on who is to...	1
Caring	1
Awkward if touch happens before I am se...	1
Creepy	1
Comforting	1
affirming, sacred	1
Connecting	1
welcoming	1
Something most people like/appreciate.	1
I associate negative things with the wo...	1

**One of the "5 Love Languages" is physical touch. If you are not sure of your love language please complete the online questionnaire now. <http://www.5lovelanguages.com/profile/>**

**38. How does physical touch rank, as a love language, for you? *Mark only one oval. (1st (highest score) - 5th, don't know)***

1st (highest score)	9
2 <sup>nd</sup>	25
3 <sup>rd</sup>	22
4 <sup>th</sup>	3
5th (lowest score)	4
Don't know	6

### **Vocation and Demographics**

**39. Clergy or laity (*Vocational Deacon, Transitional Deacon, Ordained Priest, Laity, Other:*)**

Vocational Deacon	9
Transitional Deacon	9
Ordained Priest	50
Laity	0
Deaconess	1

Retired Bishop	1
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**40. Current Employment (*FT employed by a church, PT employed by a church, non-stipendiary working with a church, not currently employed as clergy, Other:*)**

FT employed by a church	25
PT employed by a church	12
non-stipendiary working with a church	15
not currently employed as clergy	5
recently left employment at an Anglican church	1
Missionary	1
mission director	1
Bishop's wife, doing interim on occasion which is paid	1
Anglican non-profit	1
I am employed both by a church and as a Canon in our Diocese. Together it is full time.	1
Chaplain Assisted Living Home	1
Non stipend church planter	1
Retired Feb 2018 after 25 years in ministry	1
I work in a day care center and serve in a church.	1
Was PT employed by a church until this past year	1
In FT ministry with an independent Christian non-profit	1

**41. Gender (*male, female*)**

Male	40
Female	30

**42. Marital status (optional) (*married, single, divorced/ separated, widow/widower, Other:*)**

married	61
single	3
divorced/ separated	5
widow/widower	0

**43. Age (optional) (*<35, 35- -50, 50--65, >65*)**

<35	10
35-50	18



50-65	24
>65	15

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. If you would be willing to discuss any of these issues further, please complete this optional section (name/email)**

APPENDIX C  
STARTER QUESTIONS FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

1. Give some background on the nature of the project: my personal history.
2. Sign disclaimer - note if any questions make you feel uncomfortable - leave them...
3. Prior to doing the questionnaire - how much had you thought about the value or role of touch in your ministry?

Sacramental touch:

Pastoral touch?

Prayer touch?

4. Moving forward: how are you now thinking about the value or role of touch in your ministry in:

Sacramental touch?

Pastoral touch?

Prayer touch?

5. Seminary education: did it include any components on touch? Where could you envision touch being included in a M.Div. curriculum?
6. Guidance for new clergy: do you have any advice? Do you have any cautions or reservations about touch you think clergy should be aware of?
7. Guidance for ACNA: do you have any advice for how the ACNA can promote and value healthy touch??
8. What have you learned that will affect your ministry going forward - anything you will do differently?
9. Any other comments or thoughts?

APPENDIX D  
INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Project Title: **Healthy clergy touch in pastoral and sacramental ministry**  
Principal Investigator: **Elizabeth Gray, GCTS**

**PURPOSE**

This is a research study. The purpose of this research study is to explore healthy touch for Anglican clergy in pastoral and sacramental ministry. The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether to be in the study or not. You may ask any questions about the research, what you will be asked to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear.

We are inviting you to participate in this research study because you are clergy in the ACNA.

**PROCEDURES**

If you agree to participate, your involvement will be around 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire, and then approx. one hour for the semi-structured interview for selected participants.

The following procedures are involved in this study.

- On-line questionnaire (approx. 15 minutes)
- Follow-up voluntary semi-structured interview within six months of the completion of the questionnaire. This should take approx. one hour. The interview will be recorded.

**RISKS**

The possible risks associated with participating in this research project are as follows.

- Completion of the questionnaire or the interview may stir up memories of unhealthy touch: either initiated or received by the interviewee.
- All participants will be advised that should this occur they should seek counselling or follow-up personal care.

**BENEFITS**

There are no potential personal benefits that may occur as a result of your participation in this study other than contributing to the development of guidelines which should benefit future clergy in their interactions with parishioners both pastorally and in sacramental ministry.

## **COMPENSATION**

You will not be compensated for participating in this research project.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Records of participation in this research project will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. All material will be stored on Liz Gray's computer which is password protected and only accessed by her. Names will be coded. In the event of any report or publication from this study, your identity will not be disclosed. Results will be reported in a summarized manner in such a way that you cannot be identified.

## **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**

Taking part in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you agree to participate in this study, you may stop participating at any time. Your data will be destroyed, or with your permission retained for the project without identifying features.

## **QUESTIONS**

Questions are encouraged. If you have any questions about this research project, please contact: Liz Gray, +1-202-294-5131, [liz@incarnationanglican.org](mailto:liz@incarnationanglican.org). If you have questions about your rights as a participant, please contact the Co-Chair of the Institutional Review Board, David A. Currie, at: [dcurrie@gordonconwell.edu](mailto:dcurrie@gordonconwell.edu); 978-646-4176

Your signature indicates that this research study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in this study. You will receive a copy of this form.

Participant's Name (printed):

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(Signature of Participant)

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(Date)

## **RESEARCHER STATEMENT**

I have discussed the above points with the participant. It is my opinion that the participant understands the risks, benefits, and procedures involved with participation in this research study.

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(Signature of Researcher)

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(Date)

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